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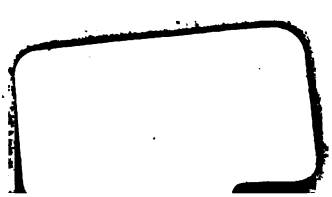

JOHN SOBIESKI OR JOHN III

KING OF POLAND.

Lith. of F. Michelin 180 Fulton St.

1891.

FALL OF POLAND;

CONTAINING

AN ANALYTICAL AND A PHILOSOPHICAL ACCOUNT OF THE CAUSES WHICH CONSPIRED IN THE RUIN OF THAT NATION,

TOGETHER WITH

A HISTORY OF THE COUNTRY FROM ITS ORIGIN.

BY

L. C. SAXTON.

"Oh! bloodiest picture in the book of Time,
Sarmatia fell, unwept, without a crime;
Found not a generous friend, a pitying foe,
Strength in her arm, nor mercy in her woe!
Dropt from her nerveless grasp the shattered spear,
Closed her bright eye, and curb'd her high career!
Hope, for a season, bade the world farewell,
And Freedom shriek'd—as Kosciusko fell."

CAMPBELL.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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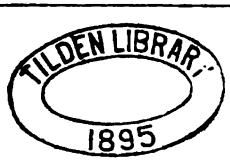

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PREFACE.

In presenting to the public a philosophical History of Poland, a brief explanation of its origin, object, and general plan of execution would seem to be a necessary prelude to the work.

The materials from which the subsequent volumes are framed, have been accumulating for several years, as time and opportunity afforded facilities for gathering them. The facts are drawn from all the reliable works which have been published in relation to Poland, including the histories, geographies, encyclopædias, periodicals, reviews, travels, and other works and papers of merit; and in cases of doubt and conflict, the translations have been carefully compared with the originals, and the weight of evidence has prevailed.

The single object of this work is to give an historical, analytical, and philosophical view of the principal causes which conspired in the fall of Poland, containing the history of the nation from its earliest antiquity.

The following volumes are designed to contain not only

the History of Poland from its origin, but also a general view of all the learning necessary for the scholar, statesman, or traveller, in relation to that unfortunate country, both as a work of reference and general information. In order to accomplish the main object of the work—which is the delineation of the principal causes of Poland's ruin—we, of course, have found it necessary to arrange the work under those analytical and philosophical divisions known in history as the general characteristics of nations, around which are grouped the principal facts and philosophy applicable to each national feature. Similar arrangements are found in the best ancient and modern histories; and of course the general plan in substance contains nothing new. It appears to be better adapted to the general History of Poland, to discuss continuously the several subjects involving the causes of her fall, rather than to interrupt the unity by periodical divisions, both of which plans, however, are optional with the historian, according to the well-settled rules of philosophical history. After a general historical sketch of Poland in Chapter I., which contains the outlines of the chronology and geography of the country, the principal characteristics of the nation are distributed into the subsequent chapters, under the most prominent national features of every fallen nation, so well known in history, namely, Sovereignty, Progression, Representation, Assemblies, Army, Wars, Aristocracy, Democracy, Slavery, Great Men, Politics, Feudalism, Government, Laws, Literature, Wealth, Society, Religion, Civilization, and Conquest.

The two remaining chapters, containing the Comparative Views of Poland and other Nations, and an Argument for the Restoration of Poland, are supposed to be no violation of unity of *interest* at least, which is, in truth, the only indispensable *unity* in history according to the canon of modern critics. In the Chapter on Comparative Views, I have drawn a comparison between Poland and the American Union, thereby correcting the erroneous statements of European writers, who profess to run a parallel between the two countries, accompanied with prophetic and unfounded assertions, that both nations were based on similar principles, and will ultimately share a similar fate. In my investigations, I have reached the conclusion, and, as I suppose, correctly, that the two republics were always entirely different in all their institutions, principles, and leading features. The First Chapter contains only the general outlines of the History of Poland, comprehending the principal events of the country chronologically arranged as starting points, around which are clustered the contents of the subsequent chapters, embracing what is deemed the most useful learning concerning that interesting country. In order to give a brief view of the principles of the several subjects discussed, and show their relations to the History of Poland, each chapter contains a short sketch of the history and elements of the several topics examined, in connection with a full description of that particular branch of history, as found in Poland, which forms the [illegible] of the chapter. In the Chapter on Progression,

after examining the general principles of improvement and its history, we then look almost in vain for any useful, permanent advancement in Poland, from the twelfth century to the conquest of the nation. In examining the subject of Polish sovereignty, a general view is given of the principles and history of the institution from its first introduction among the antediluvians to the present time; and then Polish sovereignty is traced from the origin of the nation to its dismemberment. A similar course is pursued in several other chapters, with such variations as may seem to present each subject in its true light, and in harmony with the others, so as to form one connected history of the country, so divided as to present only one branch of learning to the mind of the reader at the same time.

An erroneous opinion has generally prevailed, that the government of Poland was a democracy and a free republic; whereas, in truth, it will be found to be an aristocracy of the worst kind, and destitute of every principle of a sound democracy like the American Union. Perhaps other apparent innovations may be laid to our charge; but a careful examination of the whole work, with the facts, principles, and authorities, will give our views a substantial support. A brief sketch of the origin and progress of society, with its different classes and races, together with the laws and principles of social institutions, seemed an indispensable introduction to the society of Poland, where the blood, habits, and institutions of nearly every nation, ancient and modern, are

found to some extent mingled with the original race of Polish society, which is, doubtless, of Asiatic origin. I have, then, traced the history of Polish society from a period anterior to the Christian era, through their successive nomadic tribes to their national organization under Piast, down to the present time, viewing it as we passed in all its most important phases, as it successively mingled Polish blood with the blood of nearly every race and nation on the Eastern Continent—a fact which explains many of the mysterious misfortunes of that fallen nation.

The government, laws, religion, politics, representation, civilization, and other principal characteristics and institutions of Poland, are delineated in contrast with similar institutions in America and Europe, for the purpose of explaining more clearly and forcibly their absence or defective state in Poland when compared with a correct standard.

This method of historical writing is not without some slight objections, and involves a choice of evils, like all other things, save moral excellence; but the advantages decidedly preponderate in its favor. It is open to the criticism of occasional repetitions and digressions, which are always more or less unavoidable in philosophical and analytical investigations, where the same facts and principles are necessarily referred to in different chapters and sections for different purposes. But the more serious criticism is the objection of novelty, which, in the estimation of some respectable scholars, is unanswerable. His-

tory, as a classical science, is far behind many other departments of learning in analytical, philosophical, and inductive arrangement, and calls loudly for a thorough reform. The old plan of writing histories, by mingling indiscriminately all kinds of facts in chronological order, is comparatively an easy task for the author, but frequently makes a useless and unintelligible book for the great majority of readers, whose minds have not been trained to analytical investigations. The glory of generals, the plans of battles, military evolutions, charges, battles, and sieges, with the shouts of victory and the slaughtered thousands, are generally sung with great beauty, and described with graphic power, while the social and moral condition of the people is passed over in comparative silence.

Guizot, Alison, Macaulay, and other modern historians, have wisely and successfully departed from this style, and particularly the latter, in his History of England, who describes, in the most eloquent language, all the institutions, events, and interests of his country, from the furniture of a farmer's kitchen to the most weighty matters of law and government in Westminster Hall and the British Parliament.

The time will soon come, when historical science will be so far advanced as to give us a full and continuous history of every important department of that branch of literature, in separate volumes. We want a history of progression and improvement; separate histories of government, sovereignty, aristocracy, slavery, law, demo-

cracy, politics, civilization, society, wealth, religion, and numerous other departments of historical learning, drawn out in separate works, and extending through all ages and nations of the world. In examining the causes of Poland's ruin, we have applied this principle, not for the purposes of novelty or reputation, but for the sole purpose of making a useful book for American readers—where the science of government is best understood, and most freely enjoyed. In some instances, it has been necessary to resort to collateral facts and principles, in seeking for the causes of Poland's misfortunes, and for the purpose of furnishing data for the argument in favor of her restoration, as well as for the national comparisons, which, at first, perhaps, may seem like unnecessary digressions. If it be true, that "history is philosophy teaching by example,"—and who doubts it?—then it would seem to be not only in good taste, but both classical and necessary, for the historian to bring to his aid all the material and useful facts, for the purpose of philosophical illustrations; and that both should be symmetrically blended together in one harmonious whole. To frame a history from a simple statement of facts, without suggesting the legitimate conclusions to which they lead, or the wise principles which they teach; or merely a didactic array of principles, without being adorned with the facts on which they rest; is a style, at least, behind the age, and incongruous with the advanced stage of kindred sciences.

I have generally avoided the use of recondite materials,

as far as consistent with the nature of the subject; although occasional drafts on Oriental literature could not be avoided. In general, where the facts may fairly be presumed to lie within the knowledge of the generality of readers, or are common, undisputed, and of easy access, I have not deemed it necessary to cite authorities; but in all other cases, the sources of information are noted. In relation to the principles and philosophy of government, law, religion, society, wealth, and other elementary conclusions, which have been familiar for many years, I have not referred to the books, for the reason that it would be impossible, at this late day, to distinguish between those authors to whom I might have been originally indebted in early life, and those conclusions which should be charged to the more mature reflections of riper years. In the department of moral science, I have examined Butler, Dwight, Spring, Wayland, Scott, Barnes, Sprague, Robert Hall, and Paley, as my general text-books; and in political economy, Smith, Say, Raguet, Wayland, Potter, and the Encyclopædias, have been consulted. The principles of government and law are drawn generally from more than twenty years' professional reading and practice. In cases of doubtful and conflicting translations in the early history of Poland, I have examined the original languages, and, in some instances, found it necessary to differ from authors of respectability, when the weight of evidence was found decidedly in my favor.

In canvassing the causes of Poland's ruin, and her

claims to a national restoration, common justice requires us to distinguish between the misfortunes over which she had no control, and the vices for which the Poles are responsible; as well as the wrongs and injuries which are to be charged upon others, who participated in the fall of that nation, with criminal responsibility. In drawing the picture of Poland, as contained in the subsequent chapters, the lights and shades are intended to be introduced impartially, and in the fair proportions of history and philosophy, which contain the data on which the argument for Poland's restoration is framed.

The assertion is hazarded, without much fear of unfair criticisms, that the impartial reader will reach the conclusion, that the Poles were designed and created by the God of nature for a free and independent nation. It has always been a standing charge of monarchy and aristocracy, that the Poles loved too much freedom. And, although the Polish masses have been defeated in their ardent love and devout aspirations for freedom, by the combined fraud, opposition, and crime of monarchy, aristocracy, war, ignorance, and other kindred causes, described in the following volumes—thoughts full of anguish, and heart-rending in the extreme—yet, Poland may hope for better and brighter days, when the justice of Heaven and the humanity of earth, will redress her injuries, by a restoration to national independence, more perfect and stable than her former national glory, and founded on true republican principles.

The fall of Poland is a theme of great interest, and

will never exhaust the resources of history and philosophy, in its delineations. For, whether we consider the great variety of incidents which it exhibits—the soul-stirring events it records—the immortal characters it portrays—and the important consequences which have followed, and may hereafter flow from it, both to the unfortunate Poles themselves, and the other nations of the earth—or the lessons of individual and national wisdom which it teaches—or the pernicious influence of such a disastrous precedent on the surrounding and other modern nations—these things, so far from diminishing, will continue to increase in importance with the lapse of centuries; and through all succeeding ages, like the fall of Nineveh, Jerusalem, Greece, and Rome, will fill volumes of thrilling interest, for the present and future generations of man.

L. C. SAXTON.

COOPERSTOWN, N. Y.,
September, 1850.

INTRODUCTORY.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF HISTORY.

History of Fallen Nations—General Divisions of History—National Characteristics—Geography and Chronology the Eyes of History—History is both an Art and a Science—History Ranks between Poetry and Oratory—General Principles of Historical Composition—The Greek Historians—Latin Historians—English Historians—French Historians—German Historians—American Historians—Geographical History—General Views of History—Philosophical History.

THE study of the history, conquest, and subsequent condition of Poland, with the causes which conspired in the ruin of the first and only powerful nation that has fallen in modern Europe, is a theme of no ordinary interest to the friends of humanity and lovers of freedom. To a reflecting mind, and particularly under the influence of the more powerful emotions of patriotism, and the love of freedom, the death of a sovereign nation is an event which produces a lasting impression through life. The same humane feeling, so wisely bestowed by the beneficent Creator, excites our tears of pity for the faded violet, while it lies crushed by the heedless footsteps of the ruthless savage. To the same sympathy, may be attributed the grief we feel for the moaning willow, which sheltered us in the sports of childhood—but now, shivered by the bolt of heaven, or torn from its native soil by the

violence of the crushing tornado, lies bleeding at our feet, and silently invokes the feelings of our nature. The death of a friend whom we love, or in whose weal or woe we feel an interest, strikes a chord in the bosom of humanity, which never fails to vibrate in harmony with all the kind and benevolent feelings of the great and good of our race. But when a State, which, within the short period of little more than a century, was one of the most powerful kingdoms in the world, is blotted from the book of nations; where the hopes, the joys, and all that is most dear to fifteen millions of immortal beings, every one of whom carries in his own solitary bosom a little world within himself, are all crushed in the budding existence of national glory, there are few hearts so obdurate as not to feel most poignant grief for the woes of such an unfortunate people.

The history of fallen nations, and especially of Poland, is worthy of preservation. The long and repeated efforts of that gallant people to retrieve themselves from so many crushing misfortunes—struggling for a national existence for more than eighteen centuries—sometimes almost emerging from the ocean of calamities that overwhelmed them—surrounded by the most deadly enemies—weakened by internal faction, and crippled by ignorance, vice and war, both civil and foreign—are all themes of thrilling interest to every lover of freedom and friend of man. And when they seemed almost on the summit of fame, the false light of glory's plume vanished, like the fading hues of evening, at the approach of midnight darkness. When hope's glad visions sparkled bright and fair before their eager eyes, the wintry storm of adversity again dashing over them, blighted their vernal bloom until their clouded sun, rayless and traceless, sunk in perpetual night, leaving them in hopeless despair. Nor does the history of

Poland's woes end here. This republic never emerged, like other European nations, from the ruins and chaos of the dark ages. Their lovely and beautiful plains had just begun to bud and blossom as the rose—the feathered songsters of the North had warbled their melodies but a few evenings in the lawns and forests of classic Sarmatia, after the restoration of peace—the wounded and wearied heroes of Piast had only commenced the enjoyment of that solace and repose, which the peaceful reign of their amiable sovereign had secured them; when the ravages of the dark ages, like a mighty deluge, rolling its terrific and death-ful waters over the world, whose irresistible torrent, infinitely more fatal than Niagara's awful plunge, rushing, roaring and dashing down from cataract to cataract, century after century, until at last ill-fated Poland was engulphed in its horrible vortex, without a friend to relieve, or a mourner to grieve.

History is philosophy exemplified. It is both an art and a science. Its rank among the arts of composition is between poetry and oratory, and, in its higher departments is, in truth, one of the fine arts. The well-settled rules of historical composition are worthy of a treatise; and it may well be regretted, that some master of the historical art has not, to our knowledge, incorporated them in classical form. As yet, the elements of historical science are to be drawn from a careful perusal and analysis of the great historians, ancient and modern; and it is surprising with what remarkable unanimity they have been preserved and used, in every age of the world. History is something more than a mere record of dates, or a chronicle of wars and crimes. It investigates the laws of cause and effect, and the philosophy of sequences which are ever the same in the history of man; and reveals those motives and mainsprings of human thought, feelings, actions and

destiny, which, under the supervision of the Creator, controls the human family, in harmony with the free agency of every human being.

History, as a science, may naturally be divided into three general departments; historical facts, historical philosophy, and historical style. Historical facts comprehend only such important events in the natural and moral world as may be usefully perpetuated by record, for the future benefit of man; regardless of such incidents as are unworthy of notice, and injurious to civil society, both as precepts and examples. The duties of the historian are multifarious, complicated and difficult. The man who writes a profound, useful and interesting history, not only serves his country, and the cause of humanity generally; but contributes to the cause of science an offering, which, whether read or not, costs the author years of anxiety and hard labor. His facts must be credible, and drawn from the most truthful and learned sources; selected and arranged with wisdom and good taste, carefully distinguishing between cause and effect, between sequent and coincident events, between truth and falsehood, between doubtful and well-authenticated occurrences, and between imaginary and real deeds.

A judicious classification and arrangement of facts, without unnecessary repetition and useless minutiæ, so as to present the several national characteristics of civil society in the clearest light, are, perhaps, the most laborious duties which fall to the lot of the historian. A general array of historical annals, a confused mass of statistics, without reference to philosophical arrangement, without regard to the appropriate principles they are to illustrate and sustain, are embarrassing to the reader and tasteless to the scholar. Historical composition is too frequently overloaded

with a mass of events, the majority of which are useless repetitions, trifling incidents, or corrupting circumstances, which serve no other purpose, than to lumber the pages which record them, and enlarge the volumes which contain them.

Nations, like individuals, have a character either good or bad; the leading features and characteristics of which it is the business of the historian to draw out, classify and delineate, in accordance with facts and philosophy, for the pleasure and profit of his readers. After laying down the geography and chronology of a nation, as the eyes of history, the most prominent national characteristics which present themselves for consideration, are, politics, progression, state representation, assemblies, military and naval affairs, aristocracy, democracy, slavery, sovereignty, great men, government, law, feudalism or land policy, literature, wealth, society, religion and civilization. Around each of these elementary features of a nation, may be classified and clustered all the facts and principles worthy of being perpetuated in history. These national lineaments, it is the peculiar province of history to portray, by all necessary useful facts, and philosophy, adorned with all the interest of which historical composition is susceptible.

Historical philosophy is a rare attainment, and far more difficult in its delineation, than any other department of historical composition. Historical facts are generally matters of vision, or of memory; and may be obtained by observation or reading. But the principles and philosophy applicable to, and deducible from these facts, can be drawn only from the natural resources of a mind well-stored with all kinds of useful learning, matured by long experience, and ripened by calm and accurate reflection. In the present infantile state of philosophical history, but very

little aid can be derived from others, in classifying and harmonizing historical facts and historical philosophy. Philosophical history requires, not only the greatest familiarity with chronology, geography and historical facts generally; but a profound acquaintance with the principles of government, jurisprudence, civil society, moral science and religion; general literature, science and the arts, political economy, and all branches of philosophy and learning.

The most natural and instructive introduction to the history of any nation, and particularly of a fallen kingdom, like Poland, would seem to be a general view of the geography and chronology of the place and time of their existence. The time and place of human existence, both in the history of nations and individuals, are controlling events in all the affairs of erring mortals; and should never be overlooked in canvassing the merits and demerits of human actions. The moral responsibility, the comparative guilt or innocence of the naked, half-starved, ignorant islander, who has never seen the schoolmaster, nor his primer; where the missionary's voice has never been heard, nor his Bible ever read; where the consecrated church bell has never tolled its solemn tones in the ears of penitent mortals; where the deep-toned organ has never poured forth its streams of rich and thrilling harmony on a congregation of devout worshippers; is widely different in the eyes of Heaven, from the accountability of those who have long sat beneath the sound of the monitory voice of Whitfield, or Henry Kirke White, a Robert Hall, a Wesley, an Edwards, or a Dwight. The moral responsibility of Poland, when fairly weighed in the scales of conscience, or the impartial balances of justice, is far from equalling the

accountability of England, or the American Union, where kind Heaven has more liberally vouchsafed the choicest blessings.

It is to be regretted that history has not been made sufficiently interesting, clear, easy, profound and attractive, as to entirely supersede and drive from our libraries that mass of fictitious literature and senseless romance, which the rapacious maw of an unbridled imagination devours with such rabid greediness. There is no romance, no poetry, half equal in richness, beauty and sublimity, to the pure romance and poetry of nature. No imagination can describe it, no pencil can paint it, no music can sing it. And the whole host of fictitious works, which have swarmed like locusts in our land, fastening upon the very vitals of youthful morals with a deadly grasp, are tedious and tasteless in comparison with the romance, the beauty, and sublimity of history, when nature is recorded as it really exists.

The world is under lasting obligations to the few historians, who have elevated their works to the true style of historical composition; and so effectually engrossed the affections of their readers, with the beauties and sublimities of nature, as to leave no room for ephemeral, fictitious productions; fit only for the cultivation of mental imbecility and licentious morals, and for sapping the dignity of human nature. It is a remarkable fact in the history of literature, that modern historical works are unequal in interest and style, to those few literary gems which antiquity has kindly preserved for us. In their own peculiar style, like the Grecian statues, they have ever been inimitable; and although future ages may imitate, and possibly rival them, yet it is very doubtful whether they can, or ever will be, excelled. In this far distant period of time, after the authors have quietly

reposed in their graves for nearly three thousand years, the immortal histories of Greece and Rome still remain the most attractive volumes found in the whole circle of literature. The youth of every age, read the historical facts of these volumes, their heart-stirring legends and romantic incidents, with the most intense delight. The middle-aged draw from these inexhaustible fountains, the purest draughts of wisdom, and treasure up the philosophy of these precious volumes as a cherished memento and unerring guide through all the various vicissitudes of life; and after perusing them, again and again, during a long life of sober reflection, bequeathe them to posterity as the oracles of human wisdom. Here the aged find all the sports and scenes of their childhood, with the reflections and experience of their riper years, recorded side by side on the same pages, beautifully and tastefully mingled and wreathed with all the most lovely flowers of rhetoric, in the perusal of which, the man of gray hairs lives over his whole life again, with all its sorrows and joys, in the sunshine and the shade, in prosperity and adversity, with all the soul-stirring interest of his youthful existence.

After all the hypothetical and visionary reasons of the critics, for the all-absorbing interest of these ancient volumes, common sense and unsophisticated taste find the sources of pleasure derived from their perusal, in their peculiar style and contents. Their pages are not lumbered with an immense mass of chronological facts; but contain only such important incidents, selected from all classes of society, and from all departments of human experience, mingled with appropriate and analogous philosophy, analyzed and arranged in such philosophical and natural order, as will produce the greatest interest and most lasting effect. True, the Greek and Latin historians polish, soften, and adorn their composition,

with every variety of good style; but they never sacrifice substance to form, nor burnish their thoughts so highly as to dull their keen edge. Here we find no effort to extend pages or increase volumes; no effort to manufacture books for the market or trade-sales; but a single, honest, eloquent attempt to make a useful and interesting history, designed to illustrate and perpetuate the most important historical facts and historical philosophy known in the annals of human experience. It is worthy of notice that the Bible, the most interesting and eloquent book ever written, is composed on similar principles, under the immediate supervision and inspiration of Heaven; and it is by no means impossible, that this inspired volume—by tradition or otherwise—might have had an influence in forming the superior historical style of Greece and Rome. The obligations of the world to the Bible are numerous and lasting; for its superior historical style, blending in the most consummate wisdom and pure taste historical facts, historical philosophy, and historical style, intermingled with the most thrilling and pathetic poetry, together with the beautiful, the sublime, the awful, and cheering revelations of Heaven.

This remarkable and conceded superiority, of ancient over modern authors, is not to be ascribed to any superior genius in the former, when compared with the latter; but the difference must be sought for elsewhere. It must be ever borne in mind, that history, in Greece and Rome, was, in some respects, a very different art from what it is now. Antiquity, being destitute of romances, supplied their place with history, founded on their ballads and traditions. Narrative, with the ancients, was distinguished for its truthful conformity to nature, simplicity of event, and singleness of interest. Their histories are generally confined

to the progress of a single city, or country; and on this narrative the whole power of the author is made to bear. On this picture, the artist throws all his light, while the remainder, including the more unimportant parts of the history, are very naturally placed in the shade, or slightly illuminated, until the lights and shades of the picture gradually and imperceptibly fade into each other, and all unitedly conspire in presenting the favored object in bold and grand relief.

The histories of Xenophon, Thucydides, Sallust, Livy, Diodorus, Siculus, Dionysius, Halicarnassensis, Tacitus, Cæsar and Herodotus, are the principal and most distinguished historians, which the ravages of time have spared us. With the exception of Herodotus—the oldest historian in existence, except the history of the Bible—these ancient histories are all the annals of individual towns, countries, little republics, and single campaigns. The vigorous and comprehensive mind of Herodotus led him, by his discursive habits and extensive travelling, to give an historical picture of the whole world as then known. The superior genius of Tacitus, alone, seems to have conceived the mighty design of giving a picture of the vast empire of the Eternal City; but, even his lofty mind could not surmount the *one idea*, that all the world was Rome, and Rome was all the world. Hence, his works, so far as they have come down to us, retain the old earmarks of urban centralization—the Forum remained the only object of reverential interest—the Palatine Mount was the theatre of almost all the revolutions, which he has so graphically and eloquently described; and his immortal work is less a picture of the Roman world under the Cæsars, than a delineation of the revolutions of the palace which shook their empire, and the con-

vulsive throes by which they were attended throughout its various provinces.

As history enjoys the double rank of both an art and a science, and holds an exalted station among the fine arts and profound sciences; it is by no means surprising, that but few persons are found, who combine the rare and difficult qualifications of industry and research, which are indispensable for the correct narrative of earthly events—with that profound philosophy on all civil, literary and religious subjects, which are necessary to be intermingled with historical facts—together with imagination and poetical fervor, so indispensable to ornament and polish the whole, in a style at once highly instructive, and intensely interesting. Modern historians have a far more difficult task than the ancients. History cannot now be written, in all respects, on the same plan, and in the same style, as in the days of the Grecian and Roman authors; although the general principles of historical composition remain substantially the same. Hence, our surprise is greatly diminished at the startling fact, that antiquity can boast of only six; and modern times cannot number over eight or ten—in all not exceeding fifteen, who have distinguished themselves in historical composition, within the annals of literature.

The historian of the nineteenth century can no longer perch on the pyramids of Egypt, or the spires of a Grecian or Roman city—he can no longer confine himself to the annals of an ancient republic, the campaigns of Cyrus, Alexander, or Cæsar; but he must leave these humble pedestals, and, expanding every plume of his wings, must soar over a world of surface; plunge into a boundless ocean of facts; and grasp in his memory the history of nearly six thousand years. He must be master of the arts and

sciences, and understand all the numerous departments of philosophy, physics, philology, mathematics, music, and poetry; with a familiarity equal to nature, or at least a second nature. Since Homer sung, Tacitus recorded, and Herodotus described, the old world has nearly all passed away, and a new one, especially in the arts and sciences, has succeeded. Our fathers, where are they? And of our old historians what can we find of them, except a few leaves of their immortal genius, which the stealthy hand of time has grudgingly left us? During the lapse of more than eighteen hundred years since the Augustan age of Roman Literature, all the nations of the earth have gone to their final account, and others are now occupying their once-loved states and stations. New nations, continents, and hemispheres, have been discovered. The former social ties of nations have all been sundered, and new ones formed—woven and interlaced by conjugal, social and national ties, so intricate and complicated, as almost to defy the researches of the most powerful intellect. New sciences and arts have been developed, which have infused themselves into all human events, with the growth of mankind, and the expansion of knowledge. All the multifarious and prodigious perplexities of human transactions, commercial, military, political and moral, like mountainous masses, must all be explored, analyzed, unraveled, and brought out simply, truly, philosophically and eloquently before the reader. Progression, like a mighty, towering giant, with his stalwart arms, has been hewing down and demolishing all that was useless and erroneous of antiquity, and at the same time discovering, quarrying, and polishing new and better materials for modern institutions, far superior to those of by-gone years.

Unity of effect, which is the leading principle in all the fine

arts, and by far the most difficult of attainment, is equally indispensable in history, and seldom accomplished. The facts are so chaotic, the story so complicated, the transactions so various, the interests so diverse, the philosophy so recondite, the poetry so elevated, and the failure so dreadful—that nothing, short of the most exalted genius, the most profound learning, consummate skill, and unwearied industry, can place an author in the front ranks of historical composition. For these and other similar reasons, history cannot be successfully written on the limited, simple plan of the ancients. The wide world, the great family of nations, has become too large to admit of centring all its diversified interests only on one nation—one member of the great human family. No historian can be permitted to confine his record to the "tale of Troy divine"—nor to the touching narrative of Roman splendor and Roman heroism, nor stop with the pathetic story of conquered, fallen Jerusalem. He must incorporate in his pages, not only the history of a single nation or people, containing their most prominent, useful, and interesting annals; but he must then throw around them the contemporaneous facts of relative and neighboring nations, by way of comparison and illustration; and, after dressing them with all legitimate and appropriate philosophy, he must still throw over them the drapery of poetic and romantic interest, which is necessary to render his facts and philosophy interesting to the public.

Notwithstanding, however, the task of writing history is more than herculean, and every successive age throws over the work new and almost insurmountable difficulties, yet the fundamental principles of the mysterious art are the same as they were in the days of Thucydides or Sallust; although the difficulties of correct and successful application are greatly increased. "The figures

in the picture are greatly multiplied; many cross lights disturb the unity of its effects; infinitely more learning is required in the drapery and still life; but the object of the painter has undergone no change. Unity of effect, singleness of emotion, should still be his great aim; the multiplication of objects from which it is to be produced, has increased the difficulty, but not altered the principles of the art."* But, notwithstanding the numerous difficulties which beset the path of the modern historian at every step, still they can all be surmounted under the guidance of genius, learning, industry, and taste. Of the truth of this position, Gibbon's Rome is a signal example. This justly celebrated work embraces a comprehensive and condensed view of the principal events of fifteen centuries, successively presenting all the nations and distinguished individuals, who, during that long, dark, and interesting period, took a prominent part in the world's great drama; described in such truthful, analytical, philosophical, and eloquent style, as to convey a clear and distinct impression to the mind, of every fact, principle, and sentence in the whole work. But there is one sickening, sad defect, which can never be overlooked, and will ever be a serious blemish in Gibbon's celebrated history, and that is, the absence of that moral and religious philosophy which should ever pervade all historical compositions.

Tytler's "Elements of General History" will go down to posterity as one of the choicest specimens of historical writing, in the English, or any modern language. Its general analysis and arrangement, the truthful and judicious selection of facts, which are clothed with the richest and profoundest philosophy, both natural, civil, and moral, and ornamented with all the beauties

* Foreign and Colonial Review: April, 1844.

and excellences of style, leave no room for fair criticisms; but only excite our regret that this distinguished historian had not extended his labors to more numerous volumes, containing a more extensive history of the world, and each of its nations. In the composition of these "Elements," the eminent author has evidently taken the Greek and Roman historians as the basis of his arrangements, and general style of execution, with many most valuable improvements of his own. He writes with a master's hand in the detail of facts, such philosophical reflections as the various subjects demand, and cannot fail to aid the mind in the formation of rational views of the causes and effects of events, as well as the policy, character, and motives of the actors; while, at all times, he guards against that speculative refinement which is too frequently found in histories. Some works, while they profess to exhibit the philosophy or spirit of history, do little more than display the writer's ingenuity as a theorist, or his talents as a rhetorician—without instructing the reader in the more useful knowledge of historical facts. As the improvement of the human mind forms the principal object in the study of history, the state of the arts and sciences, the religion, laws, government, manners and customs, the state of society, civilization, wealth, geography, politics, military and naval affairs, legislation, sovereignty, and general characteristics of nations, are the material parts of every useful and interesting history.

Histories, as well as all other books, should be written with a special view of imparting instruction to youthful minds, as well as of directing the inquiries, and gratifying the refinement, taste, and curiosity of riper years. Such works must necessarily combine the elements and principles of historical science; classifications and comparative views must extensively prevail—

great attention must be paid to the selection and arrangement of topics—things differing in kind must be separated and distinguished—and generally the methods of science, with the laws by which the end is usually gained in scientific acquisitions, must all be so correctly and happily arranged and associated, as to convey the ideas to the readers, on the various subjects presented to their consideration, so clearly and forcibly, as not to fail of utility and interest.

Ancient history, when generalized so as to embrace all nations, may be profitably treated either *ethnographically*—that is, according to the different nations and states as they chronologically rise and fall; or *synchronically*, that is, according to certain general periods of time, into which the chronology of the work may conveniently be divided, in the order and importance of time. Each of these methods has its comparative advantages and disadvantages; and both may, to a certain extent, be united. The celebrated historian, Heeren, has adopted the last method in his admirable "History of the States of Antiquity," as well as in that which bears the title of the "Political System of Europe." Robbins has successfully combined both principles in his "Outlines of History;" an elementary work every way trustworthy, full of sound philosophy and good taste. But in writing the history of a single fallen nation, like Poland, the *ethnographical* style is preferable, and is adopted in the succeeding volume.

After all, accuracy and impartiality are the chief requisites of historical composition; and no substitute for trustworthiness can ever by any possibility be admitted. No description, however brilliant, no eloquence, however lofty or magical, no narrative, however poetical or romantic, can supply the place of truthful facts and sound philosophy. Hence, we find numerous great epics, to one

great history; and scores of enchanting romances, where we find only one Tacitus, one Thucydides, one Gibbon, one Hume, one Robertson, one Alison, one Macaulay, one Thiers, one Guizot, one Bancroft, one Prescott, and only one Irving. Modern Italy can boast of scores of immortal poets, painters, musicians, artists, and scholars in every department of literature; but we look in vain for a single historian who is worthy of being placed in the front ranks of the historical art. The voluminous annals of Guicciardini or Davila are far from being eminent histories. Great Britain, with all her profound learning, can number in her long list of great men, only seven eminent historians, namely—Gibbon, Hume, Robertson, Hallam, Tytler, Alison, and Macaulay. France has only one Sismondi, one Guizot, one Thiers, and one De Tocqueville. America has one Bancroft, one Prescott, and only one Irving, who are numbered among eminent historians; though others, highly respectable, in Europe and America, might be named.

This extraordinary scarcity of distinguished historians shows, most conclusively, the great difficulty of the art, and sustains Mr. Fox's assertion, which has been questioned by some critics, that history ranks next to poetry in the fine arts. It cannot be disguised, however, that the principal cause of this general failure in historical writings to command a general interest, and acquire lasting fame, is the want of comprehensive generalization, with analytical and philosophical classification. The great majority of authors, by their historical researches, become immersed in a boundless ocean of details, without chart, rudder, or compass, to guide them successfully to a favorable haven—without the genius of forming a just estimate of their comparative importance and interest—and destitute of those mental powers of analytical and philosophical classification, which constitute

the pre-eminence in historical literature; and from this cause alone, to say nothing of others, nine tenths of the numerous historical works which have been written, have been consigned to oblivion for ever, except as occasional works of reference. By a careful perusal of the few great histories which have reached immortal fame, we shall find them all possessing the same general characteristics. Those characteristics consist, chiefly, in a clear, natural, inductive division and arrangement of subjects and chapters; where the material facts are grouped around the principal institutions of nations—boldly presenting in the front ranks of thought the most material and interesting facts, while the less important incidents are graduated in the rear, among those which add nothing either to the lights or shades of the picture. In drawing such an historical picture, the most important facts, containing only those on which subsequent ages will delight to dwell—either from the heroism of the events, or the tragic interest of the catastrophes, or the important consequences with which they have affected the world, and the bearing they have on the future generations of men—should be prominently delineated. If you read Herodotus, Thucydides, or Livy, without the dilutions, perversions, and imperfections of translations, you cannot fail to recognize these controlling principles of style, without which Herodotus never could have painted with so much force the memorable events of the Persian invasion of Greece; Thucydides would have failed in his magic descriptions of the conflicting aristocracy and democracy in the Grecian republic; and Livy would never have penned his celebrated chapters of the memorable strife of Hannibal and Scipio.

No historian ever excelled Gibbon in his powers of comprehensive condensation, classification, and universal expansion of

thought. Voltaire felt most sensibly the crushing weight of the numerous historical failures, and summoning all his vigorous, original, and cultivated powers, fearlessly came to the rescue of the waning art, and struck out a new style in this department of literature. He boldly repudiated, at once, all the useless minutiæ, the meagre details, the tedious descriptions of dress and disgusting ceremonies, the fulsome praises of monarchs and aristocrats, with the invidious aspersions of the masses—which filled the pages and disgraced the volumes of the old chronicles and monkish annalists; and, resolving to restore history to its legitimate rank and true design, confined his leaves to the most striking delineations of the principal events which had occurred, adorned with a well drawn picture of the changes of manners, ideas, and principles, with which they were accompanied, interlacing the whole with science and philosophy. The world at once hailed his labors as almost a miraculous improvement on the insipid and jejune narratives of former authors. Like magic, the rich and spicy "*Siècle de Louis XIV*," the life of Peter the Great, and Charles XII., were immediately on every table and in every library; and the popularity of the new historian spread over the literary world, while the dry and massive details of Guicciardini, and the sleeping, ponderous tomes of Villaret or Mezeray, and the credible quartos of De Thou, obscurely slumbered on the retired and dusty shelves of the bookstore and libraries. But time, the sure reformer of human frailties, where its monitory voice is wisely heeded, ere long revealed the truth, that this *sketchy*, *torpedo* style of history was too fanciful and fleeting for durable fame. And what is still more to be regretted, Voltaire, with all his talents and popularity, forgot to be a Christian, and blundered into the meshes of infidelity.

This flashy, dazzling, and ephemeral history, with its infidel author and his imitators—the French Raynal, the German Schiller, and English Watson—soon gave place to a style far more beautiful, rich, and sublime, as found in the immortal works of Gibbon. This historical sketching, which seems to be now fast reviving again, is not without its merits. It is far more useful when adorned with truth, sound philosophy, and good style, than novels, love-sick romances, and vulgar ballads; and, therefore, will answer the purpose of a certain class of light readers, boarding-school girls, and school boys; but it will not answer the purpose of scholars, statesmen, jurists, politicians, professional men, heads of families, and sober thinkers. It lacks that indispensable ingredient in history, of a comprehensive, well selected condensation of facts, mingled with a clear and profound philosophy. Its pages are only amusing, and, therefore, not permanently interesting. The inquiring mind expects something more in history, than an able sketch of the leading features and brilliant characters of the periods embraced.

The French revolution introduced a new and improved style of historical composition, and may be regarded as the great era of historical literature. The face of humanity never fails to mantle with the rubric of poignant emotion, over the sad reflection that the French revolution was the great school in which men were taught to feel. Alas! for humanity, that the reckless depravity of the race should provoke the Almighty to make the bloody reign of terror the common school, in which all the world, as nations and individuals, should take lessons in the science of human nature, until man should learn to feel for man! The deep-toned feeling of this sad age infused itself into the literature of the times, and stamped itself indelibly on the pages of their

history. The poet, the historian, the orator, the painter, the sculptor, the musician and the statesman, the merchant and the divine, almost simultaneously, the world over, were fired up by the profound emotions, the dreadful sufferings, the heart-stirring interest, the floods of tears and streams of blood, of that awfully eventful period. This most dreadful shock, which convulsed the world, chilling every heart and deranging every pulse, terrifying even the embryo existence of posterity, and almost disturbing the silent repose of the grave, like an antediluvian deluge, buried in eternal oblivion the whole tribe of superficial, stoical, and infidel historians. This frothy, ephemeral style, which was frequently confined to a lady's dress, the dancing of a minuet, or fingering a piano; which revelled in sneering at priests and ridiculing religion; delighted in eulogising kings, flattering aristocrats, and stigmatising democrats; was all completely entombed within the brief period of a few waning moons.

It was these ever-memorable times which at once consigned to the vast and sombrous tomb of things that *have been*, the sketchy style, the philosophic contempt, the hypocritical indifference, the sceptical sneers, and silly infidelity of Voltaire and his followers, and introduced to the world a new class of authors, who knew by sad experience what real suffering was, and that the God of Heaven controls human destinies. Accordingly, in the early annals of the French Revolution, we meet with the new and better works of Toulongeon, Bertrand de Molleville, the Deux Amis de la Liberté, and Lacretelle, which, in force and beauty of painting, simplicity and pathos of narrative, vehemence and richness of language, had been unknown for many centuries in Europe. This distinguished literary era gave rise to the great school of modern French history, —of which the celebrated Sismondi was the father and founder—

in which Guizot, Thierry, Barante, Thiers, Mignet, Michaud, and Michelet were educated: whose immortal works present a greater amount and variety of historical talent than any other nation, ancient or modern; although, perhaps, they may not, every one of them, equal the very few master-spirits of English history.

The English authors, fired with the zeal of their French neighbors, now commenced a new era in British history. The profound and sagacious Gibbon, whose poetical mind and pictorial eye had carefully watched the movements of the philosophic school of Voltaire, Hume, and Robertson, at once anticipated the great change which misfortune and suffering would produce on the next generation.

To these inspiring circumstances, Britain's great historian is indebted for much of his extraordinary excellence and superiority in delineating events, to any of his predecessors or successors. "He united the philosophy and general views of one age to the brilliant pictures and impassioned story of another. He warmed with the narrative of the Crusades or the Saracens,—he wandered with the Scythians,—he wept with the Greeks,—he delineated with a painter's hand and poet's fire, the manners of the nation, the features of the countries, the most striking events of the periods which were passed under review; while, at the same time, he preserved inviolate the unity and general effect of his picture: his lights and shadows maintained their just proportions, and were respectively cast on the proper objects. Philosophy threw a radiance over the mighty maze; and the mind of the reader, after concluding his prodigious series of details, dwelt with complacency on its most striking periods, skilfully brought out by the consummate skill of the artist, as the recollection of a spectator does on any of the magic scenes in Switzerland, in which, amidst an infinity of beautiful

objects, the eye is fascinated by the calm tranquillity of the lake, as the rosy hues of the evening glow on the glacier. We speak of Gibbon as a delineator of events; none can feel more strongly or deplore more deeply the fatal blindness—the curse of the age—which rendered him so perverted on the subject of religion, and left so wide a chasm in his immortal work, which the profounder thought and wider experience of Guizot has done so much to fill."*

The histories of Hume and Robertson, for their clear and trusty narratives, their calm and profound philosophy, will ever remain as standard models of historical composition for all future ages; and continue as monuments to their fame, more durable than the pyramids of Egypt or the statues of heroes. It will probably be a long time before Hume will be excelled in his profound reflections, in the inimitable clearness and impartiality with which he has summed up the weighty arguments on both sides, on the most momentous questions which have agitated England and Europe, as well as the uniform unity of plan; while his simplicity of narrative, his inductions, suggestions, and instructions,—his beautiful descriptions and exciting pathos, will never fail to command the admiration of reflecting and tasteful readers.

Robertson's merits, as a historian, are different, and, upon the whole, inferior to Hume. Robertson is not excelled in his profound and interesting philosophy, in his just and well balanced mind, or in his eloquent and forcible expression; but he does not appear to be gifted with that deep and far-seeing sagacity, and that penetrating intellect, which have immortalised Bacon, Hume, and Johnson. But, in surveying the broad current of human events, and in forming just and profound conclusions concerning

* Foreign and Colonial Review: April, 1844

the mutations of time, and the changes of centuries, he has never been surpassed; and in these respects his first volume of Charles V. may be considered without a parallel in the history of literature, if we except Guizot's History of Civilization. His powers of description, as displayed in his brilliant picture of America, and the manners and customs of the savage tribes which then inhabited the Western continent, justly entitle him to immortal fame in that most important branch of historical composition. But, in portraying political events, and in revealing the mysteries of human nature and human motives, his limited knowledge of practical acquaintance with man, is at once betrayed. No man can be a great historian without extensive experience, and a long and familiar practical acquaintance with man, in all the various walks and relations of life. The human heart can never be truly described from hearsay, without actual experience and personal knowledge. It is one thing to be a historian by reading, and quite another thing to write from observation. Robertson had not enjoyed the practical acquaintance with man and civil society which Hume had acquired by his long diplomacy and extensive connexions in social life. And, most unquestionably, it was this practical acquaintance, and long mingling with public affairs and private life, which has given such immortal celebrity to the histories of Thucydides, Sallust, and Tacitus, for their profound, beautiful, and sublime descriptions of the human heart. The Greek and Latin historians saw the battles they described, and the scenes they painted; but Robertson lost the benefit of this practical acquaintance with the men and things which he records, by living alternately in the seclusion of a Scotch mansion, or at the head of a Scotch university, surrounded by books and all the comforts of life. But, let no one suppose that experience alone, without profound study and exten-

sive reading, will make an historian; both must be combined; and he who writes for celebrity, must drink freely at both fountains. But it seems to have been reserved for Colonel Napier, to excel all others, ancient or modern, in the descriptions of battles, and the heart-stirring scenes of military warfare.

Geographical history, one of the most important branches of the art, has generally been neglected by the great majority of historians. The description of countries is no less important in historical science, than men and manners. Both Hume and Robertson have left this fertile field of historical research entirely untouched, which Herodotus and Gibbon have cultivated with such surprising success. It is a great mistake to suppose that geography is without the legitimate province of history. It gives variety and interest to historical narrative, by fixing places and regions in the memory of the reader; by augmenting the attractions of the story; by filling up and clothing in the mind's eye the scenes in which it occurred; and by enlivening and enriching the annals with the enchanting scenery of mountains and valleys, forests and fields, meandering brooks and dark roaring oceans, variegated with urban and rural scenery, which form some of the principal attractions of the great masters of the art.

Doubtless the attractions of history may be greatly increased, and the insipidity and tameness of the story enriched, by comparative views of ancient and modern nations; by mingling the past, present, and future, in striking contrast; by a sedulous recurrence to contemporary annals and authority; and by introducing, not only the facts and statements, but the ideas and words, found in ancient and contemporary historians. And hence arise the habitual references to original authorities, not only at the bottom

of the page, but by quotations actually incorporated in the text, which are found in the volumes of the French historians, Thierry, Barante, Sismondi, Michelet, Guizot, and others; while the more modern European and American authors have followed the same rule. While it is conceded that this is an improvement, it must not be forgotten that this rule of historical composition also has its just limits. Facts and principles, which are so common and well known, that they may fairly be presumed to lie within the reach of ordinary readers, and within the range of common libraries, and are well settled, need no authorities. But such materials as are recondite, doubtful, or difficult of access, should be illustrated and sustained by quotations and references, indicating the sources of information; without marring the unity of the story, and, in conformity to the ever memorable rule of Mr. Fox, that history ranks next to poetry, and before oratory. We know of no historian who has applied this rule more skilfully than Mr. Prescott.

It is an elementary principle in history, as well as in the fine arts, that generality of effect is produced out of speciality of objects. Brilliancy of imagination must be united with fidelity of drawing. History is as susceptible as any of the fine arts, of being gradually condensed and drawn to a blazing focus of thought, by such a masterly combination and generalization of all the facts, philosophy, and imagination of the story, as to produce the most beautiful, interesting, and symmetrical unity. This rule of generalization is equally controlling in all the fine arts. It reigns equally supreme in the inimitable style of Phidias and Raphael, of Homer and Virgil, of Tasso and Milton, of Sophocles and Racine. Although, in the inferior styles, there is almost an infinite variety in all the fine arts, yet, in the higher walks, there is

only one; and the principles of both are the same. A comparison of Tasso's Jerusalem Delivered, with Dubufe's Adam and Eve, will illustrate our meaning. The painter brings all the power of his art to bear on the two pictures of the primeval bliss of our first parents; one of which portrays their original happiness, and the other describes the miseries of the fall; both of which are greatly heightened in interest, by being contrasted side by side. Mark with what magic power the distinguished artist makes all the various and numerous incidents of the first picture, conspire in telling the supreme felicity of the happy couple. The tall, manly, grave, reflecting, well proportioned, and devout figure of Adam; while his eye, beaming with intelligence, is gradually turned towards his Great Master in Heaven, with an almost imperceptible smile on his countenance; with an eye glancing at the beautiful attitude of Eve, as she presents him the tempting apple—at the same moment doubting whether to receive it, or remain firm to the command of his God; the inimitable beauty of Eve—the sweet and happy expression of her countenance—the lovely attenuated hand that presents the tempting fruit to her happy lord, with all the irresistible charms of her sex; while the lovely dove, that innocent wanderer of earth and air, perched on the bough, turns up his bright eye on the lovely scene, which so soon is to be ruined by the disobedience of man;—together with the smiling, fawning lion, playing at the feet of the heavenly pair, who are soon to be transferred to the next canvas in mortal agony; all conspire in telling one story—in one sublime unity—the primeval happiness of man. Nor is the unity of effect less strikingly preserved by contrast in the second canvas, which tells the sad and only tale of

"Man's first disobedience, and the fruit
Of the forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
Brought death into the world, and all our woe."

With the same exquisite skill, Tasso applies the same rule in producing one uniform impression, from all the varied events of his "Jerusalem Delivered;" in this consists his great superiority to the endless adventures of the more brilliant and imaginative Ariosto. The same principles may be easily traced in the compositions of the "Prometheus Vinctus" of Æschylus, the "Hamlet" of Shakspeare, and the History of Gibbon.

It is a mistake to suppose that history is necessarily drier or less interesting than poetry or romance. History, it is true, must give a faithful record of events; and, unless it does this, it is equally destitute of veracity, usefulness, and interest. It is in vain to urge, that reality is less attractive than fiction, feigned distresses more poignant than real woes, imaginary virtues more ennobling than actual graces, or that wakeful hours are less reliable than the dreams which follow them. The superior advantage of fiction lies in the narrower compass which it embraces, and, consequently, the intense interest which it can communicate, by working up the characters, events, and scenes of the story to such a state of magical feeling, as to almost entrance us. But all this has been done, and can be again, in historical composition. The field of history gives unlimited scope for all the varieties of style; including the narrative, the didactic, the inductive, the argumentative, the descriptive, the pathetic, and the persuasive style, with all the embellishments of rhetoric, even poetry and oratory not excepted. All the leading characters and events can be delineated in history, with the same force, brilliancy, and

fidelity to nature, as in poetry and romance; with the additional interest which arises from the events being real—not fictitious—an advantage of the first importance to the great majority of readers. The highest aim and first duty of history is instruction, and not merely amusement. Nor is amusement inconsistent with instruction. Truth is always best conveyed when it is clothed with an attractive garb; and always runs a great hazard when it is superseded by the attractions and dilutions of fiction. Thousands of readers have learned more English history from Shakspeare and Scott, than from Hume and Lingard. Solomon, the wisest of men, never disdained the aid, even of imagination and fancy, in communicating his most profound proverbs and instructions; and the Great Master of our Salvation frequently used parables in His immortal lessons.

Unity of style and composition, and especially unity of interest, must never be overlooked by the historian. The author who sits down to the task of historical composition, must select for his theme a single subject—as the fall of a nation, a revolution, or general history of a nation, as the case may be; and all his subjects, chapters, comparisons, contrasts, delineations, and general views, together with his narratives, arguments, and descriptions, must all be in subservience to the grand theme, and present a uniform, harmonious unity of interest throughout. Every composition in the fine arts, to produce a powerful impression, and attain a lasting success, must have that *unity* of *expression* and *unity of interest*, which, as in poetry and the drama, is equally essential to the production of those delightful emotions in the mind of the person to whom it is addressed; and this unity must prevail equally throughout the entire work, however numerous or few may be the pages and volumes. The author

may choose his subjects, his annals, his arguments, his descriptions and materials, as he pleases, and arrange them either *ethnographically*, by continuing each general and national characteristic chronologically from the first origin of the nation; or adopt a *synchronical* arrangement, according to certain general periods of time, provided unity of style and interest be preserved. Thierry, Barante, Michaux, Sismondi, Michelet, Sharon Turner, Lingard, Hallam, and others, who rank high as historians, have unfortunately departed from these principles, by disregarding history as one of the fine arts. They have neglected the elementary rule of Mr. Fox, who ranks history next to poetry, and have not studied unity of effect or harmony of composition. In their profound researches for accuracy, they have sometimes injured effect; and in their great anxiety to give original words they have often sacrificed originality of thought. Their volumes are invaluable to the annalist as books of reference; but they have left open the door for some future genius to supersede them, by writing works of far greater interest on the same subjects. In their ambition to preserve accuracy of statement and fidelity in narrative, they have made it a cardinal point, generally, to give the very words of their original authorities. This is a great mistake, and most seriously mars every principle of rhetorical unity. It is impossible to make an harmonious whole, by a selection of quotations from a great number of original writers of various styles and degrees of merit, running through several centuries. You might as well attempt to make a beautiful carpet by patching together pieces from all the carpets of Turkey; or a lovely picture by pasting together slices of all the paintings of the Louvre; or compose an oratorio, by selecting from the scores of Handel, Haydn, Mozart, Weber, and other eminent masters.

The style and effect of history may frequently be greatly increased by general contrast. Whatever serves to delineate the civil, moral, and religious condition of a nation, may be lawfully pressed into the service of history, and be made to share its part in the great historical drama of the people. The annals, geography, chronology, sovereignty, great men, politics, progression, representation, assemblies, army, navy, wars, aristocracy, democracy, slavery, feudalism, chivalry, government, laws, literature, civilization, wealth, society, religion, and the conquest of fallen nations, must all necessarily pass in review, in writing a full history of a country. Some of these national characteristics, such as government, laws, wealth, and religion, may be best delineated by erecting a correct philosophical standard, and contrasting it with the same imperfect institutions found in the country to be described.

Historical critics have long since yielded the question, that biography is no longer to be excluded from history. Its true province as a branch of historical science is, to describe the character and influence of the great men of a nation, who generally wield its destinies, and stamp their character indelibly on the institutions of a state for ever, for weal or woe. Without stooping to notice the low vices of a people, or lumbering the narrative with unnecessary minutiæ of facts, all the leading men, and those who have exercised a controlling influence in forming the national character, should be brought out prominently in every complete history of a country.

Clear, condensed, comprehensive, and general views of history, after travelling through the more minute and varied incidents of the story, form one of the most interesting and useful features of historical style. Such panoramic views, at the closing scenes of

long narratives, where all the most prominent facts are presented in a few terse, eloquent sentences, form a beautiful and rich polish, which, when done with a master's hand, never fails to produce a thrilling interest.

Of all the various qualities of historical style, description stands in the front rank. Rhetorical description naturally divides itself into three general branches: first, sensual description, which requires nature to be described as it really appears to the human senses; second, scientific description, which delineates things as they are really known to the arts and sciences; and, third, imaginary descriptions, which paint objects and thoughts as they appear to a correct, enlightened, and lively imagination. The successful combination of the three is reserved for those master spirits who rarely adorn this world; and in this superior quality of style consists the greater excellence of the modern over the ancient historians. The ancient authors excel in their sensual and imaginary descriptions; but are inferior to the modern writers in scientific description; for the well-known reason, that the sciences were not so generally known to the authors of antiquity. The great superiority of Milton, Shakspeare, Scott, and Lamartine, in their descriptions, consists in their surpassing skill in combining in the most forcible and eloquent manner, these three qualities of descriptive style.

But of all the modern improvements in historical composition, the philosophy of history is by far the greatest and most important. So far as we are advised by historical annals, Machiavel was the first historian who seems to have formed a just conception of the philosophy of history. Previous to this distinguished writer, the narrative of human events was almost exclusively confined to a series of battles and biographies imperfectly interlaced

and connected by a few hasty sketches of the empires, and political history of governments, with a few important chronological events. In this style of history the ancient historians have never been excelled. Their inimitable skill in simple, clear narration; in portraying the most interesting events in biography; in tracing the rise and fall of cities and states, with all their varied fortunes, with the biography of the distinguished patriots and statesmen who raised them, and the detestable tyrants and traitors who ruined them, is without a parallel in modern history. On this limited model are formed the histories of Xenophon and Thucydides, of Livy and Sallust, and of Cæsar and Tacitus. These immortal works, however, record all the events of history in connection with the lives of the few great men who flourished in the times they narrate, regardless of the masses. Viewing history as an extensive species of biography, they never describe human affairs as under the influence of a series of causes and effects, independent of the agency of individual man; for they were ignorant of the Christian religion. The Greek and Latin histories sparkle with charming episodes of individuals, and graphic pictures of particular events, with which they abound; but scarce any general views on the progress of society, or the causes to which its surprising success in the Grecian and Roman states were owing, are to be found in their eloquent pages. True it is, that Sallust's introduction to the life of Catiline, which every scholar reads in the original with such thrilling interest, contains a most masterly sketch of the causes which corrupted the republic, and constitutes one of the best specimens of philosophical history, and, if we except the Bible, which abounds in this style of composition, Sallust may be considered the first author in the philosophy of history. Had Sallust continued the same

style throughout his work, it would have been one of the most profound and interesting philosophical histories of his or any other age. We find some interesting specimens of caustic and profound observations on human nature, and the virtues and vices of a corrupted age, scattered through the writings of Tacitus; but, like the maxims of Rochefoucault, and others of similar caste, they are confined to individual cases, instead of being extended to general views of humanity, which is the true province of philosophical history.

But Machiavel of Italy, and Bacon of England, are the great pioneers in this department of history; who, for the first time in the annals of literature, reasoned upon human affairs as a science. To these two fathers of true philosophy, and particularly Lord Bacon, the world is indebted for all the great discoveries and improvements in natural and moral philosophy, which have been made since their day. In their profound works may be found the germs of all true philosophy, which have inspired modern genius to the herculean task of developing the mysteries of science, and of reducing the most profound discoveries to a system of simple didactics, within the capacity of the schoolboy. These great masters, in their philosophical contemplations, regard the minds of men as permanently governed by well-established principles; which, under the supervision of the Deity, invariably lead to the same results. They treated of politics as a familiar science, governed by certain known and fixed laws, as invariable as the laws of gravitation and physical attraction. This was a gigantic step in the march of science and human progression. Civil, religious, political, and literary society was then just emerging from the deluge of the middle ages; which, for ten centuries, had been trying and experimenting upon human nature in all its various

and numerous phases. These two champions of philosophy were introduced to an immense store of facts, that had been accumulating by the experience of ages, which they analysed in their mental laboratories, and from which they drew deductions and analogical conclusions in relation to the affairs of nations, never to be doubted or shaken. The celebrated *Discorsi* of Machiavel will go down to the future generations of ages yet to come, as the text-book of moral philosophy; containing the eternal truths of human nature, and those omnipotent laws of society, applicable to every future generation, and to all the circumstances of men. The unrivalled Florentine statesman has never been surpassed in the depth of his views, and justness of his observations. Lord Bacon's essays relate, for the most part, it is true, to the subjects of morals and the domestic relations; but are frequently enriched by profound observations on the general concerns of nations and society, nicely and justly mingling his enlightened observations of the past, with his almost prophetic anticipations of the future.

Voltaire professed, and boldly attempted to introduce, the philosophy of history into French literature; but his infidelity prevented his success, and lost him credit for what he actually performed. No infidel can write a philosophical history. You may as well expect the Ethiopian to change his color or the leopard his spots—as soon may you write the Oratorio of the Creation or of the Messiah, without the chord of the seventh, or a single modulation, as write the philosophy of human history, without a mind thoroughly imbued with the principles and spirit of the Christian religion.

The skepticism of Gibbon, notwithstanding his unrivalled talent for description, deprived him of the mind necessary for a philo-

sophical analysis of the motives and consecutive causes which influence human events, and control the destiny of nations.

Hume has the reputation of being a philosophical historian; and to a certain, but limited extent, he has justly earned the fame. There is a wide difference, however, between the philosophy of history, and the history of philosophy. Hume, strictly speaking, is a philosopher writing history, and not a philosophical historian. The history of the world in every age abundantly proves, that the experienced statesman, generally, is a better writer of philosophical history, and reflects more profoundly and accurately on the causes and progress of human affairs, than a philosophic recluse. And the reason is obvious. The statesman has more practical acquaintance with the secret springs of human thoughts, feelings, and actions; and this makes the difference between Sallust, Tacitus, Burke, and Guizot, on the one hand, and Gibbon, Hume, and others on the other. The former studied the heart of man, not only in the didactics of schools, but in the forum, the palace, the camp, and the social walks of life. Hume, with all his excellences as a historian, disqualified himself for philosophical discussion, by falling into the skepticism of Voltaire and Gibbon.

Montesquieu, in his works, known as *Esprit des Loix*, and *Grandeur et Decadence des Romains*, has secured everlasting fame, though the latter is much the greater work. There is no work in any language, in which the philosophy of history is more ably, clearly, and comprehensively condensed, or where the philosophy of cause and effect, in relation to the rise and fall of nations, is more profoundly portrayed in all its elementary features. It is to be regretted that he has not extended his philosophical history to modern times, where he could have found full scope

for his colossal genius, in the ample materials which he has collected in his *Esprit des Loix*, in which he displays the same philosophical and generalizing talent. Bossuet, in his Universal History, professes to give a development of the plan of Providence, in the government of human affairs, during all antiquity, down to the reign of Charlemagne. The aim was lofty, and the idea most grand, and every way worthy of the commanding powers and glowing eloquence of the Bishop of Meaux; but the execution is far from equalling the sublime conception. Voltaire's criticism on this work contains more truth than fiction—that the Bishop professes to give a view of universal history, but has only recorded the history of the Jews.

It remained for Robertson to do, what Bossuet left undone. The first volume of his Charles Fifth may be read as the best philosophical history of his day. With the single exception of his defective religious philosophy, his philosophy of history has never been excelled except by Guizot.

Sismondi, Alison, and Macaulay have won immortal honors in their histories, and should ever receive the grateful thanks of those who love historical composition. Alison's history of Europe is a work of great merit, but it is to be regretted that his politics and philosophy of government are at least a century behind the age; and his gross abuse of America and American institutions will ever sully his otherwise spotless fame.

No author, ancient or modern, has ever equalled Guizot in philosophical history. His history of French civilization, and the civilization of Europe, with his Essays on the history of France, are glory enough for one man.

In writing the philosophy of history, the great object is instruction—with as much interest as possible—by presenting the

great and general facts of history, clothed with those elementary principles of politics, law, government, morals, and religion, which will ever remain the fundamental laws of social and individual existence. The author is at liberty to pursue his own plan of execution, provided his story preserves truthfulness in narration, and philosophy, with unity of interest. There are two general plans of execution and arrangement: one is to divide the work into the general characteristics of nations, and discuss each continuously and separately, without interrupting periods, as in "Guizot's European Civilization;" and the other is to pursue the great national features of the people in successive periods, as in the history of French Civilization, by the same author. Each has its advantages, according to the nature of the subject. Where the narrative can be greatly improved in its instruction and interest, by proceeding periodically, as in the Civilization of France, that arrangement is preferable; but where there are no successive periods of preponderating interest, as in the philosophical history of Poland, and Europe generally; and where all the leading facts and philosophy of the people can be best delineated, by grouping them continuously and separately around the general characteristics of nations, as found in their chronology and geography, their progression, sovereignty, great men, politics, representation, assemblies, military and naval affairs, their aristocracy, democracy, slavery, feudalism or land system, their government, laws, literature, civilization, wealth, society, and religion—the latter plan of execution possesses superior advantages over all others; and is, therefore, pursued in the following work

FALL OF POLAND.

CHAPTER I.

HISTORY.

General Principles of History—General Divisions of Polish History—History of Poland previous to the Election of Piast in A. D. 830—The Reign of the Piasts—The Reign of the Jagellons—Reign of the Elective Kings—The Conquest of Poland—The History of Poland subsequent to the Conquest.

The affairs of nations, as well as of individuals, have their tides. Both have their prosperity and adversity, their birth, life, and death. Providence has so interwoven human affairs, and established such invariable laws of sequence, such intimate relations of cause and effect, that we can retrace the revolutions and existence of a people, and investigate the causes of their grandeur or misfortune, by pursuing their history and philosophy, step by step, back to their birth. The history of Poland is filled with lessons of wisdom. That one of the most ancient and powerful kingdoms of Europe should be blotted out of the book of nations, at so early a period of its existence, is an ominous fact in the history of governments, over which the statesman, the phi-

losopher, the Christian, and every citizen, may well pause and examine its causes, its philosophy, and consequences. The laws of national existence, progression, and improvement, are as well settled as the laws of the mineral, vegetable, and animal kingdoms. And in all cases, if these laws are violated or neglected, sickness and death are the natural and inevitable consequences. The prosperity or adversity of nations depends upon their conformity to the elementary principles of a sound government. Government is a science; and its laws are every way adapted to the capacities and wants of the people, when correctly understood and applied. The moral responsibility of nations, like individuals, is measured, not by the knowledge they *have*, but by the knowledge they *might* have, by the use of the means they possess.

Poland was formerly one of the largest and most powerful kingdoms in Europe. It contained two hundred and eighty-four thousand square miles, and about fifteen millions of inhabitants. It is one of the most level countries in all Europe; and derived its name from *Pohlen*, a Slavonic word, which means a plain. It forms a part of that immense, unvaried level, which covers the northern portion of all the countries of central Europe, expanding far into the interior of Russia. The climate is cold and moist; and the soil exceedingly fertile, and so well adapted to the growth of grain, that the annual exports have been estimated at sixteen millions of bushels. The entire kingdom of Poland formerly extended from the Borysthenes to the Danube, and from the Euxine to the Baltic.* It was the Sarmatia of the ancients, and embraced within its bosom, the original seat of those nations which overran and subverted the Roman Empire. Prussia, Moravia, Bohemia, Hungary, Ukraine, Courland, and Livonia, are all

* A map of Poland will be given in the Second Volume.

fragments of this ancient and powerful dominion. Its vast and uncultivated plains cradled the ferocious Goths, who crossed the Danube in Roman ferries, never to return. Here were born the courageous Huns, who, under Attila, desolated the empire with their invincible arms. From the same forests emerged the Slavonians, who overspread the greater part of Europe.

The history of this unfortunate nation shows it always in war, frequently victorious, but never benefited by its conquests; and, for a long time before the partition, it had been gradually on the decline. It emerged, for a time, from the shock which overthrew the Roman Empire; and from that hour, the glory of the State shone more dimly, until at length it fell the victim of its ancient provinces. While the surrounding states of Europe have advanced in liberty, government, wealth, learning, and religion—progressing from one degree of national improvement to another—growing, strengthening, maturing, and continually ingrafting into their system, the more pure and fundamental principles of republican governments, Poland alone has been retrograding and degenerating; neglecting all improvement, and alternating from the most splendid triumphs to the severest reverses; until at length, the former mighty deliverer of Europe in one age, was in the next erased from the list of kingdoms.

The history of Poland is most naturally divided into six general periods; first, the History of Poland previous to the reign of the Piasts; second, their history during the reign of the Piasts; third, the reign of the Jagellons; fourth, the reign of the elective kings; fifth, their conquest; and sixth, their subsequent history.

The first period of Polish history runs back from the year 830 A. D., the commencement of the reign of the Piasts, to the time

of Lech, a great-grandson of Noah. From him, the Poles make the *Heneti*, or the *Ainetoi* of Homer, Herodotus, Æschylus, and Euripides, descend. These they consider the progenitors of the Sarmatians, who were the immediate ancestors of the Poles.

The Slavonians and other nations, who inhabited the northern parts of Europe and Asia, were called by the ancients, Sarmatians. European Sarmatia comprehended Poland from the Vistula, Prussia, Courland, Livonia, Russia, European Tartary, and the Crimea. Asiatic Sarmatia embraced Asiatic Russia, Siberia, and Mongolia. The Sarmatians were all nomadic tribes, and were probably descendants of the ancient Medes, who originally inhabited Asia, between the Don, the Wolga, and Mount Caucasus. They were allies of King Mithridates VI. of Pontus, who were settled on the west of the Don, and afterwards spread over the country between the Don and the Danube. They were frequently the terror of the Asiatic kings, the most remarkable of whom were the Jazyges and the Roxolani, who carried on for a long time, a fierce and bloody war against the Romans. A part of them, with other barbarians, entered Gaul in the year 407, and the remainder were conquered by Attila; but after his death they submitted to the Emperor Marcian, who gave them a residence on the Don. Here they subsequently united themselves with the Goths, and formed with them one powerful nation, who afterwards, swarming from this northern hive, overran and conquered Rome and all Europe.

The Roman arms never penetrated any part of this extensive level tract of country, the whole of which was called by them, Sarmatia; and Sarmatia and Scythia were early known as the abode of nomadic and savage tribes. From the earliest period in their history, this country appears to have been inhabited by the Slavonic tribes, an extensive race, and distinguished by a peculiar

language, by their strong national feeling, their gross idolatry, and religious superstition. Though they were shepherds, they were not as migratory in their character as the Teutonic or Tartar nations, with whom they subsequently mingled; and for a long time were held in the most cruel bondage by the Huns, the Goths, and other Asiatic nations. During the numerous great convulsions produced by the incursions of the Goths and Huns; and more particularly, during the two hundred years of their struggles and wars with Germany, and their internal wars, the Poles acquired a surprising elasticity and versatility of character,—consisting of pliancy and obstinacy, submission and defiance, servility and patriotism, war and peace, of aristocracy and democracy.

The first Slavonic tribes, which, in the sixth century, expelled the old Finnish tribes, marched up the Dnieper, and followed down the course of the Vistula. Here they settled on one side, under the name of Lithuanians, and on the other, around the shores of the Baltic, under the name of Prussians and Lettians; and in the seventh century they were followed by the Leches, another Slavonic tribe. The Leches were more civilized than the other wild hordes, and received Christianity about the year 960. About the same time the art of writing was introduced, and in the latter part of the tenth century they were first called Poles, or Slavonians of the plain.

The early history of Poland rests principally in their traditions and the songs of their early bards; particularly prior to the monkish annals. The most ancient records preserved in the archives of the country, are a memorandum of a private family-compact, dated 1088, and a bull of Pope Clement III., which was issued about the end of the twelfth century. The monks, who introduced

the Catholic religion into Poland about the year 960, were the first pioneers of writing in the kingdom, and made the first records. Nearly all the Polish historians, from Martin Gallus of the twelfth century, whose works are the oldest extant, until nearly the seventeenth century, were clerical gentlemen, and wrote in Latin. The early history of Poland comes down to us principally by tradition, which was accumulated and preserved from generation to generation, by the several nomadic, wandering, warlike tribes, whose government, previous to the reign of the Piasts, was merely patriarchal, and of Asiatic origin; conducted by the military chiefs of the respective tribes, very similar to the chiefs of the American Indians, and the Arabian tribes of the present day.*

The second important period in the history of Poland, commences with the reign of the family of Piast, who came to the throne A. D. 830, and continued till the year 1386; a period of nearly six centuries. Many centuries must have elapsed, many revolutions deluged the country, and numerous warriors, such as Krakus, must have ruled the Gothic hordes, before the more humble, peaceful shepherds and husbandmen of Poland, chose Piastus, or Piast for their king. The boundaries of Poland at the commencement of this period, lay between the Vistula and Oder, extending not much beyond the Vistula and Oder, reaching not far beyond the modern Posen to the north, and as far as the Carpathian mountains to the south, comprising the greater portion of what is called Poland proper. Gnesne and Posen were cities of note, even at this ancient period, and were nearly on the northern boundary line. The Vistula formed nearly the eastern limits between Poland and Russia; while

* Fletcher's History of Poland, 14.

Hungary, Bohemia, and Silesia formed the southern and western boundaries.*

In the beginning of the ninth century, the government of this rude people, in the form of savage tribes, ruled by their chiefs, was uniformly arbitrary; and formed and defended by a savage soldiery, eventually succumbed to a military despotism. The business of war in such a state of society, must necessarily be performed by simultaneous and united exertion; and this can be done only by uniting the individuals of society in one body, under one general commander. The Polish *voyvodes*, or barons, had just asserted their liberty, and emancipated themselves, at this early period, from the tyranny of their despot, or chief Popiel. They tell us that Heaven fought for them; and in the language of barbarians, that a swarm of rats were bred in the dead bodies of the tyrant's victims, which destroyed the whole family, as a just retribution for their wrongs. These savages, after disposing of their chief, tried to enjoy unrestrained liberty; but this they soon found impracticable in a barbarous society, and were compelled to choose another chief in the person of Piast. The ducal authority descended from son to son, whose reigns are not conspicuous in history until the accession of Mieczylas I., who ascended the throne in 964, and died in 999. His principal successors in the family of the Piasts, were Boleslas I., Casimir I., Boleslas II., Wladislas I., Boleslas III., Boleslas IV., Mieczylas II., and Casimir II. After several successive, but unimportant reigns, Wladislas III., ascended the throne in 1306, and was succeeded by Casimir III. in 1333. In 1370, Louis, king of Hungary, ascended the throne, whose death terminated the dynasty of the Piasts in 1382.†

* Fletcher, 15, 16, 42.

† Fletcher, 19, 22, 42.

Louis having no male heirs, the Poles called Hedwiga, his daughter, to the throne, in 1384, after an interregnum of two years. She was married to Jagellon, Duke of Lithuania, who embraced the Christian religion, and united Lithuania with Poland, as conditions of the marriage. This duchy was a great and valuable accession to the geographical territory of Poland. It extended from Poland on the west beyond the Dnieper or Borysthenès on the east, and from Livonia on the north. The Lithuanians and Samogitians are different clans of the same origin, and are now generally believed to have sprung from a different race from the Poles, having a language widely dissimilar to the Polish or the Russian, and were low idolaters in their religion. Jagellon died in 1433, and his son Wladislas received the crown of Poland. He was succeeded by his brother, Casimir IV. John Albert, his son, succeeded to the throne on his death in 1492. His successors were Alexander, Sigismund I., and Sigismund Augustus. The latter died in 1572, and with this monarch ended the line of kings of the house of Jagellon, which had continued for one hundred and eighty-six years. During this period Poland reached its highest national glory, excepting, perhaps, the subsequent reign of Sobieski.*

The fourth period of Polish history commenced with the elective kings in 1572, and continued until the abdication of Stanislas Augustus in 1796, a period of two hundred and twenty-four years. Sigismund, the last of the Jagellons, and the last of the hereditary monarchs, having died without a male heir, restored the crown to his subjects for their disposal, which was the cause of great and continued strife, war, and disaster, until the final conquest and dissolution of the kingdom. The ambitious nobles,

* Fletcher, 44, 54.

who had been continually encroaching on the royal authority, now carried their equality, rivalry, and aspirations for the crown to such dangerous extremities, as to prefer a foreign prince, rather than yield to the coronation of one of their own number. Hence the Polish Crown was made a prize of competition for foreign princes, and the neighboring potentates now commenced that bloodthirsty struggle for Poland, which finally resulted in the conquest and ruin of the nation. After an interregnum of about one year, and after passing several laws regulating the future elections of their kings, the nobles assembled at Warsaw, with all their military pomp and retinue, well armed for the fight. After the assembly had convened, several candidates were nominated, among whom was Henry, Duke of Anjou, son of Catharine de Medicis, and brother of Charles IX., the reigning king of France, who was finally elected king of Poland. He received the Polish crown reluctantly; and immediately after reaching Warsaw, hearing of the death of his brother, the king of France, he abdicated voluntarily and secretly the throne of Poland, and returned to Paris. Anne, the sister of Sigismund, with Stephen Batory, Duke of Transylvania, for her husband, was elected as the sovereign of Poland in 1575.*

Batory, who died in 1586, was succeeded by Sigismund III., prince of Sweden, in 1587; who died in 1629, and was succeeded by his son Wladislas VII. This bigot, who died in 1648, was followed by his younger brother, John Casimir. This monarch abdicating the throne, returned to France, and Michael Koribut Wiecnowiecki was chosen king of Poland, in 1669. On the death of Michael, in 1673, John Sobieski, the most distinguished king of Poland, was elected to the throne May 19th, 1674, and reigned

* Fletcher, 58, 62, 273.

until his death in 1696. He was succeeded by Augustus II., elector of Saxony. This prince, after being dethroned several times, and fighting his way back to his palace repeatedly, closed his eventful life in 1733, after a reign disastrous in the extreme, both to himself and his subjects.

The Poles, on the 11th of September, 1733, re-elected Stanislas, who formerly had been defeated, and was again driven from the throne, while Augustus III. was crowned by Russian power. On the death of Augustus in 1763, Stanislas Poniatowski was made king of Poland, by his licentious mistress, Catharine of Russia, September 7th, 1764; and with this monarch ended the national career of Poland, on his abdication in 1796.

The fifth period in the history of Poland, embraces the time of that unjust, treacherous, and bloody tragedy, in which Russia, Austria, Prussia, and Poland were the actors, and in its catastrophe, revealed a scene of national villany unparalleled in the history of crime. This disgraceful plan of dismembering and plundering unfortunate Poland, first originated with the king of Prussia, or his brother, prince of Hungary! In 1772, Poland became distracted by internal dissensions, which furnished Russia, Austria, and Prussia with a pretence for interfering, who accordingly took possession of a large portion of the country, and divided it between them. In 1793, they interfered a second time, and made a second dividend. And in 1795, they partitioned the balance between them. Thus, by three repeated acts of the greatest injustice, and by the double crime of fratricide and matricide, Poland fell.

In 1815, the Congress of Vienna erected a small portion of the central part of ancient Poland, containing about forty-seven thou-

sand square miles, and two millions of inhabitants, into a state, by the name of the "Kingdom of Poland," and placed it under the government of the emperor of Russia, who, in consequence, added to his long list of royal titles, "The King of Poland." A Polish constitution was soon issued by the emperor Alexander, consisting of one hundred and sixty-five articles, which would have greatly improved the condition of this unfortunate people, if they had not been so frequently and so cruelly violated by Russia.*

On the 29th of November, 1830, an insurrection broke out in Warsaw, and immediately extended throughout the kingdom, and other parts of ancient Poland; which, after a short but severe struggle for independence, was quelled by an overpowering Russian army. By a proclamation of the emperor Nicholas in 1832, Poland was incorporated with Russia, and has since formed an integral portion of that mighty empire.

All that now remains of this once powerful nation, the common parent of the modern kingdoms of Europe, is, the fertile soil which entombs the bones of her heroes—together with a salubrious climate—the detached fragments which belong to their cruel destroyers, Russia, Austria, and Prussia—distinguished from the surrounding nations only by their national character, language, and manners—a towering monument of national misfortune, and a beacon to all nations, to avoid a similar fate by shunning similar errors. Her patriots wandering, weeping, and dying in every clime, in every continent and kingdom on the globe, robbed of their native country, their homes, their hearths, their families, and the graves of their ancestors, are daily invoking the ven-

* A copy of this constitution will be found in the Appendix.

geance of Heaven on the heads of their merciless tyrants and robbers.*

The remaining history of Poland will be found in the succeeding chapters.

* Alison's Hist. of Europe, chap. 17, p. 348, Rulhière's Hist. of Poland, also Fletcher's and Salvandy's.

CHAPTER II.

SOVEREIGNTY.

General Principles of Sovereignty—Sovereignty of Poland under the Piasts—Sovereignty of the Jagellons—Sovereignty of the elective Kings.

Section I.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF SOVEREIGNTY.

Sovereignty, in its largest sense, is the absolute right to exercise supreme power, without responsibility to any superior, except the Supreme Being. Such sovereignty is despotic and uncontrollable, when possessed by an individual monarch, or by a number of individuals, as an aristocracy. When any society of men, or body politic, is united for the purposes of government and mutual protection, such a society, or body politic, is called a *state* or *nation*. Every state or nation possesses the attributes of sovereignty, independence and equality, with other nations. Every nation which governs itself without dependence upon any foreign power, is considered a sovereign state. But it must not be inferred, that the possession of such absolute, despotic sovereignty, is necessary to the existence of a nation; or that it is ordinarily conferred, or proper to be conferred, upon any one man, or number of men, as the functionaries of government.

But it is competent for the people, composing any state or nation, to exercise such power, or to confide it to their public officers; and the exercise of this power by either the state, or its lawful agents, cannot be questioned by any foreign state or government.

In all governments, there is what is commonly called a sovereign or supreme power. The word *sovereignty*, when applied to a nation, means, generally, only its independence. A nation or state which has the right of making its own laws, and the right of making war and treaties with other nations, is called a sovereign or independent state. But when the term sovereignty is applied to the internal government of a state, it has a different meaning; and in such cases signifies supreme power, or power superior to all other power in the state. In a despotic government, sovereignty is said to reside in the king or supreme ruler, who is called the sovereign. In a democracy, where the people possess the power of governing themselves, the *people* are called the sovereign. In the general sense of the term, however, sovereignty, or unlimited supreme power, is exercised by one man, as in Russia; or a single body of men, as in an aristocracy.

In all the nations of the earth, sovereignty has assumed one or more of the following forms: 1. Patriarchal sovereignty; 2. Monarchical sovereignty; 3. Aristocratic sovereignty; 4. Stratocratic sovereignty; 5. Democratic sovereignty; and 6. Theocratical sovereignty. Patriarchal sovereignty exists where the sovereign power is exercised by a patriarch or head of a family, as the common parent of several generations. This form of sovereignty is called a patriarchy; and existed probably as the prevailing government of the antediluvians, which was handed down through Noah to the nations after the flood, as in the

family of Abraham; and is still found in Arabia and among the American Indians. Monarchical sovereignty prevails where the government is called a monarchy. There are two kinds of monarchical sovereignty, absolute and limited. Absolute monarchical sovereignty is nothing more nor less than the uncontrolled will of the sovereign; as the Emperor of Russia. Limited monarchical sovereignty is restricted and controlled by law, as in England. Aristocratic sovereignty, is the power of a select few, who claim to govern their nation with supreme sovereignty, usually called the nobility; and such a government is called an aristocracy. Stratocratic sovereignty is a military form of government; as the government of the Cossacks. Democratic sovereignty is the sovereignty of the people who compose the nation; and is found only in the United States of America. A Theocratical sovereignty is the sovereignty of God, as displayed in the government of the Hebrew nation.

When we speak of a nation's sovereignty, we mean that it is not connected with any other nation, so as to be obliged to receive laws, magistrates, or dictation from it, to supply its treasury with revenue, or in any way submit to foreign government or control. Wherever we find a nation whose laws are framed by its own magistrates, whether elective or hereditary, irrespective of any other nation; where the taxes are levied for the support of its own interest, and for the maintenance of its own magistrates; where it is at liberty to make war upon a foreign state, or to enter into alliance with any foreign power, as they please—without the consent of any other nation or power—such a nation, by the common consent of the world, is called a free, independent, and sovereign state.

Nor does the submission of a people to the will of a despot, in

the least conflict with the nation's claims to independence and sovereignty. The subjects of a state may be dependent upon the caprice of a tyrant or monarch, where he indeed has absolute power over their lives, property, and political interest; but such slavery does not deprive them of their just claims to national independence, nor debar them from participating, as such, in the national affairs of other states, in accordance with the received principles of international law—provided that their own master is not also subject to some foreign power. A subject state becomes independent, when, finding itself strong enough for its purpose, it throws off the yoke of the ruling power, and declares itself independent; and if it succeed in establishing its claims to freedom, either by arms or the consent of the government to which it was subject, it is then recognized as a sovereign nation by other independent states.

National sovereignty is founded on the individual sovereignty of the subjects. A man is said to be independent in his character, when he does not permit the opinions and acts of others to influence his conduct, so as to turn him from the path of duty, wisdom, and virtue. He is independent in his opinions, feelings, and actions, when he maintains them in spite of opposition, ridicule, or the principles of the rest of the community. If he govern himself according to these opinions, and carries out, by activity, his ideas of right and wrong, though they may differ from others, he is a man of independent character. And in exact proportion as a man controls his principles, his feelings, and actions, according to wisdom, virtue, and justice, independent of the conflicting interests and opinions of others—so he may be considered an independent man; and the individual sovereign and master of himself, and those whom he may influence. But the

individual who is so subservient to others, that he will disguise his own opinions and uphold those of others, for some benefit conferred, or from the expectation of some advantage; or will stoop to flatter his patron, or pretend to guide all his actions according to the ideas and wishes of others, and regulates his conduct by rules which he knows to be wrong—merely under the influence of expected favor—such a man has no claim to independence of character, or to individual sovereignty. Individual independence or sovereignty, when governed by sound principles and wisdom, is the highest of all earthly attainments, and worthy of the ambition of every citizen; but when a man's independence and decision of character lead him to abuse everything, and refuse to conform to those elementary principles, sound customs, and usages of a virtuous, progressive, enlightened community, on which the greatest good of the greatest number depend—his independence at once becomes egotism, and his individual sovereignty degenerates to the worst slavery. A sovereign nation, composed of citizens who are themselves individual sovereigns of the right character, is the perfection of all human sovereignty, and prevails more extensively in the American Union than in any other nation.

All sovereignty is primarily derived from the Supreme Being, the Great Sovereign of all kingdoms and worlds. Human sovereignty belongs to the people, to be used in conformity to the Divine will—for the greatest individual, social, and national good of the whole, all things duly considered. The people, in their sovereign capacity, may delegate a certain portion of their power to their rulers; and when it is abused, they may resume it again, and delegate it to others more worthy. This is a neces-

sary principle in dividing the labor of government for the mutual benefit of all.

No fact appears more prominently in history, than that the people have, in all ages and nations, claimed the sovereign power of government; and hence, the long-repeated, continued, and bloody wars between the rulers and their subjects, which appear in nearly every page of history. The delegated power of sovereigns may be abused, and frequently is, especially when the rulers gain an undue advantage over the people, as in the case of absolute, hereditary monarchy; but the people never entirely lose sight of their sovereign rights; and sooner or later, when a more favorable moment arrives, they dethrone the tyrant, and place his delegated powers in safer hands.

We have seen that the people have adopted various forms of delegated sovereign power, such as patriarchal, monarchical, aristocratical, stratocratic, and republican or democratic sovereignty. This power is conferred by the consent of the masses expressed or implied. The popular voice of the people is generally expressed by the elective franchise, as in republics; and in some cases of monarchy and aristocracy; and sometimes is implied by common, silent consent, as in patriarchal governments and hereditary monarchy. But whatever form the delegated sovereign power may assume, and whatever may be the form of delegating it, still the principle holds true in all cases, that all sovereigns and rulers derive their power from the people, and subject to their control. Patriarchal sovereignty prevailed generally from Adam to the time of founding the Assyrian empire, about 2,229 years before Christ—the oldest of kingdoms, including Babylonia. The patriarchal sovereignty of the antediluvians would naturally be conferred by the silent consent of the children on their com-

mon ancestor, from generation to generation; and when continued for eight or nine hundred years—the age of several of the patriarchs—it might very naturally, by implication and parental right, pass into the form of a monarchy. And this appears to be the most probable origin of monarchical governments.

Monarchical sovereignty, since its origin, has always been the most prevalent form of government among all nations. Sensible of its assumed and doubtful tenure, trembling at every movement of the public arm, conscious of its long-continued and cruel abuses, and fearing its merited punishment at the hands of an abused and angered people, it has always been on the look-out with its Argus-eyes, and always assuming some new chameleon form, for the purpose of dazzling the multitude; sometimes yielding and adapting itself to the condition and wants of the people, as a last resort to escape from public execration. The history of monarchy, with all its good and evil carried out in all its traits of character, detailing its origin, its existence, and its final destiny, remains yet to be written.

American sovereignty, lodged in the hands of a free people, and delegated by them to their rulers for limited periods, through the elective franchise, is a decided improvement on all the forms of sovereignty, as the experience of more than half a century has clearly demonstrated. The sovereignty of the American people in the United States, as delegated in a limited extent to their rulers, in the form of a democratic republican government, is so wisely divided and balanced in the hands of the people, and their delegated public servants, that little danger can be apprehended of any serious abuse.

Each State in the Union is a free, independent sovereignty—a nation of itself—subject to such powers as are conferred by the

common consent of all the States, on the general government; to which all the States and Territories are subject, to the extent of the constitution and laws of the general government of the Union. American sovereignty is divided and balanced by the people: 1. Into a general, united, national sovereignty for the benefit of all; 2. State sovereignty, including the people of the State; 3. Territorial sovereignty, embracing the inhabitants of a territory; 4. Counties, comprising the people of each county; 5. Corporate cities; 6. Towns; 7. Congressional districts; 8. State senate districts; 9. Judicial districts; 10. Assembly districts; 11. Election districts; 12. School districts.

All these several departments of popular power possess a limited sovereignty for special purposes in the several departments of government, derived from the people for limited periods, and divided on the philosophical principles of the division of labor.

A sovereignty like this, embracing every wise and useful principle of all governments, together with all the improvements which the wisdom of a free, educated, and religious people can suggest, is not found in the annals of the world.

But how wide the contrast between American and Polish sovereignty!

Section II.

SOVEREIGNTY OF POLAND UNDER THE PIASTS.

The kings of Poland present a clear case of royalty without sovereignty. This republic was familiar with the democratic principles of liberty and equality, as they were understood in the

north of Europe five centuries before they became the watchword of the French revolution. Hereditary royalty was always regarded with jealousy. During the period of one hundred and sixty years, the race of the Jagellons sat on the throne of Poland with as regular succession as the Plantagenets of England; and the dynasty of the Piasts administered the government for four hundred years previous. But all the efforts of these successive monarchs failed to form a regular government. The fate of the Polish kings differed from the sovereigns of other and surrounding nations. The greatest kings of Poland were ultimately overthrown, and their reigns variegated with the most stormy and disastrous events. Every attempt at national improvement and progressive change, on the part of regal power, was met in the outset with irresistible opposition by the obstinate nobles, and crushed in the bud.

"The crown of Poland has always been, in reality, elective; although it was for nearly six centuries successively in the hands of the great families of the Jagellons and the Piasts. The king had the disposal of all offices in the republic; and no inconsiderable part of his duties consisted in travelling from province to province to administer justice in person. It was reserved for the nobility to perform the duties of sheriff, by carrying into execution all the royal judgments and orders with their own armed force. The command of the armies was not generally conferred upon the sovereign; and as there was never any considerable standing army in the national service, the throne was nearly destitute of all military power.*

The early sovereigns of Poland, previous to the Piasts, and during the first period of their history, reaching back through

* Rulhière, History of Poland, 17, 18, 19; 1 Alison, chap. 17, 350.

their ancestors, the Sarmatians, and their progenitors, to a period anterior to the Christian era, were known only as patriarchs and military chieftains of their respective nomadic tribes. Patriarchal sovereignty is the most despotic and tyrannical, and very naturally ends in absolute monarchy. As the tribes increase in number, conquest soon becomes an object of ambition—wars and contentions soon consolidate several tribes into one, and ultimately one chief becomes the absolute monarch of the whole; and thus national sovereignty is progressively established among savage and barbarous nations. According to the traditionary history of Poland, the Heneti, who were the descendants of Lech, the grandson of Noah, were the progenitors of the ancient Sarmatians, the more immediate ancestors of the Poles. The *Heneti*, or *Ainetoi*, are particularly described by Homer, Herodotus, Æschylus, and Euripides, in whose history we find a remarkable similarity. The sovereignty of all these ancient tribes was very similar, and corresponds with the sovereignty now held by the chiefs of the American savages, and the Asiatic tribes of Arabia. This kind of sovereignty is the most ancient, and generally prevails among savages and barbarians.*

The sovereignty of Poland continued substantially the same under their chiefs, until 830 A. D., when the patriarchal sovereignty was exchanged for an absolute monarchy under Piast. This worthy prince, although of humble origin, was raised to the throne under peculiar circumstances. The Polish *voyvodes*, or barons, had recently emancipated themselves from the tyranny of Popiel, their despotic chief; and, finding by sad experience that they could not long exist without sovereignty in some form, concluded to try an absolute monarchy. On their assembling to

* Fletcher, 13.

appoint their king, they found themselves divided in severe contests; and, while the more powerful nobles were opposing each other's pretensions, an humble individual, whose low condition permitted him to pass silent and unnoticed through the crowd of noisy competitors, succeeded in obtaining the vacant throne. In addition to their political troubles, they were suffering the miseries of a severe famine; and death, in its most horrid forms, was carrying on its awful ravages among the people, when two angels —say the old monkish historians—arrived at Cracow, and took up their abode with one Piast, a poor artisan—a wheelwright—son of Kossisco, and a citizen of Kruswitza, which was then the seat of government.*

Piast was distinguished for his hospitality, and for his benevolence to the poor, during the famine. His stock of provisions was reduced almost to the last crust, which, in connection with a small cask of wine, he shared with his guests. His benevolence and virtues secured numerous friends, and elevated him to the throne. He followed implicitly the directions of his angel visitors, and, like the good widow of Samaria, distributed the contents of his little cask among the famishing multitude, and found that "it failed not." The people almost unanimously declared, that he was chosen by the gods to be their king; and the barons or nobles, in compliance with their wishes, carried him from his shop, and set him on the throne, in 830. His power was unlimited, and controlled only by his own will, and the fear of the nobles. He used his power with honesty and discretion, and his reign of nearly thirty-one years was a period of peace and prosperity to his subjects. This was the first and last period of thirty years' peace, which Poland ever enjoyed, and justly entitles the

* Fletcher, 17.

distinguished prince, whose reign secured this long period of national prosperity, to the immortal fame, which his talents and virtues have won.

The sovereignty of Poland, in the form of ducal authority, yet possessing all the powers of an absolute monarchy, descended from son to son in the family of Piast, without interruption and without any particular distinction, until Mieczylas I., who came to the throne in the year 964.*

This sovereign was born blind; but at the age of seven, without any assignable cause, was restored to his sight. Such an event, though it might have been accounted for by natural laws, was immediately pronounced miraculous and supernatural, by an ignorant, bigoted, and superstitious people; and by the monks, was interpreted as a Divine intimation for raising Mieczylas to the throne. He became the devoted lover of Dombrowka, the daughter of the Duke of Bohemia, a country where the Christian religion had recently been embraced. The religious principles of the fair lady prompted her to accept his offers, on condition that he would be baptized, and embrace religion. The prince, whether under the controlling influence of love or religion, or both—it is not material now to inquire—accepted the terms, and sacrificed the superstitions and prejudices of his country, for his lady love, and her Catholic religion. He soon became a devoted champion of Christianity, and with his own hands destroyed the religious idols of his people, and erected Christian churches on the ruins of heathen temples. He founded the Archiepiscopal Sees of Gnesne and Cracow, and appointed St. Adalbert, who had acted as the leader in introducing Christianity into Poland, to be the first diocesan of the See of Gnesne. The reign of this sovereign was distin-

* Fletcher, 19.

guished for his introduction of Christianity into his kingdom, and for a life of ardent devotion to the interests of religion. He established a law, that when any portion of the Bible was read in the presence of the nobles, they should half-draw their swords, in testimony of their readiness to defend its sacred principles.*

On the death of Mieczylas, in 999, the ducal authority devolved on his son Boleslas I., known as Boleslas the Great. Imitating the example of his father, he devoted himself to the defence and dissemination of the Christian religion, which they had recently adopted. The first act of his reign was to obtain the remains of St. Adalbert or Albert, from the Prussians, who murdered him, and deposited the sacred relics with great pomp at Gnesne. For this act of gratitude to the memory of this saint, who first introduced Christianity into Poland, Otho III., emperor of Germany, conferred on him the royal dignity, which was subsequently ratified by the Pope. But, peace-making was not the only business of this king; he was compelled to defend his country and religion with his sword. His first battle was with the Bohemians, whose duke, without any provocation, had invaded Poland with a large army, laying waste the country with the most wanton and barbarous ravages. But the invaders were soon conquered by the victorious Poles. Boleslas was a distinguished and successful general, as well as an eminent sovereign of Poland.

Boleslas, after a reign of twenty-six years, of nearly continuous war, died in 1025, leaving the crown to his son, whose short reign of nine years was distinguished only for peace, luxury, quiet, and debauchery, interrupted by two or three revolts of his subjects.

* Fletcher, 20.

Casimir I., grandson of Boleslas, when his father died, was young; and the Poles, fearing he might follow the pernicious example of his father, would not permit him to exercise full regal authority, and the nobles appointed Rixa, his mother, as regent. She shamefully abused her subjects by imposing enormous taxes and other impositions, in consequence of which she was obliged to flee from Poland, and fraudulently carried with her the national treasure. Her son Casimir was also compelled to leave his country to escape the vengeance of the nobles. The throne being vacant, the slaves rebelled, and declared war against their masters; while a universal scene of domestic carnage ensued. The Bohemians, invading the country on the west, and the Russians on the east, ravaged and destroyed all before them. The Poles, finding domestic and foreign war about to ruin their kingdom, again resorted to their sovereignty, and invited Casimir, whom they had just banished, to return and resume the sceptre.*

This fugitive prince, after a lapse of five years since his flight, could not, at first, be found. At last they learned from his mother, in Germany, his place of concealment. On leaving Poland, he went to France, where he had become a student in the university of Paris; he then visited Italy, where want and starvation compelled him to enter a monastery to beg a piece of bread, and there assumed the religious habit. Subsequently he returned to France and became an inmate of the abbey of Cluny, where he remained in seclusion while the Poles were in search for him. When found, his religious vows, which prohibited him from engaging in the secular affairs of life, at first forbad his return to the throne, until the Pope dissolved the sacred ties by an ample dispensation, on condition that the Poles should pay Peter's pence, and the

* Fletcher, 23, 24.

whole nation should shave their heads, and wear, like other Catholic professors, white surplices on festival days. The Poles still continue to shave their heads, except a small portion on the crown. Casimir, on resuming his sceptre, immediately restored peace in his kingdom, and settled all difficulties with his Russian enemies, by marrying Mary, sister of the Russian duke. Nor did he forget his religion, and his obligations to his friends who had aided him in his exile. The monks of Cluny, who had afforded him an asylum when his own subjects had exiled him, were invited to Poland, and some of them stationed in the abbey of Tyniec, near Cracow. Casimir's reign of sixteen years was distinguished for peace and prosperity to the nation, and his talents and virtues were respectable.*

On the death of Casimir, his son, Boleslas II., ascended the throne. This king possessed benevolence, mingled with a great variety of vices. In the days of his prosperity, he was a shield and house of refuge for neighboring kingdoms and princes. He was always ready to fight everybody's battles, relieve every one's wants, and sympathize in others' misfortunes. His court was the asylum of unfortunate princes; and the son of the duke of Bohemia, the brother of the king of Hungary, and the eldest son of the duke of Russia, were under his protection at the same time, and the pensioners of his bounty. He reinstated them all on their thrones; and after fighting the battles of the monarchies of Hungary and Russia twice over, he lost his own crown by his benevolence to the latter prince. The success of his arms met with very little resistance, except from the city of Kiow. The citizens fought with desperation; but the invincible forces of the Polish king, aided by famine, soon overcame all resistance. The generous

* Fletcher, 25.

conqueror treated the vanquished citizens with all the kindness of a humane general. His conquered enemy reciprocated his humanity with a glorious triumph, and shouted his praises as he marched through the streets of the fallen city. But Boleslas, though invincible in war, soon found an enemy in prosperity, which tarnished all his glory and faded all his laurels. Kiow was the foster-child of Constantinople, and of the Eastern empire. It was the common storehouse of all the luxuries of Asia; and the Greeks soon found that the Polish warrior would easily be conquered by the voluptuous and licentious vices of the East. Giddy with prosperity, and surrounded with the dazzling splendor of Athenian architecture, they soon became intoxicated with wine and beauty; and both the king of Poland and his hardy soldiers were soon conquered, and shorn of their strength in the laps of their eastern Delilahs. Boleslas and his heretofore unconquerable army, lounging and sleeping month after month and year after year, on the beautiful soft couches of Kiow, forgot their country, their homes, their wives, and their children.

After an absence of seven years, which they had spent in their wars and pleasures, their wives became impatient and faithless, and finally bestowed their smiles on their servants, in a union of licentiousness and vice too degraded for ears polite. This domestic revolt at length reached the ears of their husbands at Kiow, who furiously cursed Boleslas for being the author of their delay, and consequent disgrace, and returned to their homes to wreak their vengeance on their wives and paramours. The battle was awful in the extreme; while the wives fought by the sides of their new lovers against their husbands! At length, Boleslas appeared at the head of his few remaining troops, and slaughtered the wives for their infidelity, the slaves for their presumption and insolence,

and the husbands for desertion. St. Stanislas, bishop of Cracow, shocked at this fiendish slaughter of Boleslas, reproved and threatened him with the curses of the church, and refused him admittance into the cathedral, while he was performing mass. The enraged king burst into the sanctuary, and murdered the distinguished prelate while engaged in his devotions at the altar. The worthy saint was buried in the cathedral of Cracow, where a superb monument is now standing.

The Pope, enraged at the murder of his devoted servant, roared his thunder and flashed his lightning round the devoted head of Boleslas, until he was accursed, excommunicated, dethroned, banished, ruined, dead, and buried. "How are the mighty fallen!" The generous prince who formerly, in the sunny days of his prosperity, had fought the battles of all who asked him—who had protected unfortunate sovereigns in adversity, and given them crowns and kingdoms,—now, in his own day of extreme misfortune, found no one to bestow on him the smallest pittance; and those on whom he had freely bestowed his bounty, now refused him a morsel of bread, or even a tear of pity. Abandoned by all the world, hated by friends and foes, deemed as one abandoned by heaven and earth, he wandered away into the forests, where his only asylum was the dens and caves of savages and barbarians. At length, the poor man, broken-hearted and crushed in his hopes, his spirits, and energies, returned to shed his last tears and breathe his last sighs in a monastery at Carinthia, where he ended his miserable existence in performing the menial services of a monkish kitchen.*

The vengeance of the Pope was not satisfied with crushing the father, but he continued to pour out his vials of wrath on the

* Fletcher, 26. Tableau de la Pologne, I., 458.

sons of the unfortunate Boleslas, and excluded them from the throne. In the great abundance of his mercy, however, he permitted his brother Wladislas to assume the supreme authority, but denied him the pomp and titles of royalty. Wladislas appointed one of his favorites, *palatine*, or commander-in-chief, which was the origin of the palatines.

On the death of Wladislas, his son, Boleslas III., ascended the throne in 1103. But the regal dignity was not restored by the Pope until more than two hundred years after, in the reign of Stanislas II. Boleslas found that his royal father had divided the Polish kingdom between his children, which led to bitter contentions; but finally terminated in the universal dominion of Boleslas. Immediately after consolidating his kingdom, and seating himself firmly on the throne, he drew his sword in the defence of the king of Hungary, then involved in a war with Henry V., emperor of Germany, who had aided Boleslas in uniting and securing the Polish throne. Boleslas and his army suffered so severely in a battle with Henry, that he was compelled to make overtures of peace by his ambassador, Scrobius. Henry, with his usual insolence and pomp, received the ambassador, but refused all overtures of peace, unless the Poles would become tributary. He then conducted the Polish minister to his treasury to exhibit his wealth; and pointing to his gold, with a haughty, significant air, told him there were his weapons with which he intended to reduce Poland to subjection. The ambassador, making no answer, but taking a ring from his finger, threw it into the heap, politely saying with a smile, "Here is something to augment the store." Henry, shutting the coffer with equal coolness, said, "I thank you." A battle immediately ensued, in which the Germans, with their gold, were completely routed, and the German emperor, anxious to

make peace with the Polish prince, ratified the treaty by giving him his sister in marriage; which, in the estimation of Boleslas, was a double victory. Boleslas, after conquering in forty pitched battles, and having earned a distinguished reputation as a general and statesman, was doomed, like his ancestor, to experience a reverse of fortune; and closed his hitherto successful career in misery and disgrace, by the treachery of his friends. A black-hearted Hungarian, by his tale of sorrow, had wormed himself into the generous confidence of Boleslas, and thereby obtained the government of one of the frontier towns, which the ingrate afterwards betrayed to the Russians. The duke immediately marched with his army to chastise the traitor and his conspirators; and while encountering the enemy, was again betrayed by the treason and cowardice of one of his generals, the palatine of Cracow, and defeated. These overwhelming misfortunes prostrated all his energies of body and mind, and soon brought him to his grave, in 1139, robbed of all the glory and laurels of thirty-six years' uninterrupted prosperity. During the reign of this sovereign, the *pospolite*, or militia of Poland, was first established. Every palatinate—of which Poland proper contained eleven—was required to raise a certain number of cavalry within a stated time, who held themselves in readiness for the king's military orders.*

Boleslas III., previous to his death, divided the kingdom between his four eldest sons, very much to the dissatisfaction of his subjects and his children. Each of the four dukes adopted the motto, "all or nothing;" and after various bloody conflicts between them, Boleslas, the second son of the late king, obtained the ascendency, and was declared sovereign of Poland in 1146. He permitted the children of his elder brother, Wladislas, to retain Silesia, which

* Fletcher, 30.

continued in his family a distinct government, but was a fief of Poland. It continued some time under the control of the descendants of Wladislas, and ultimately became subject to the crown of Bohemia in 1339; and was afterwards invaded by the Prussians. Wladislas, not contented with the limited patrimony his younger brother had allowed him, aided by the emperors of Germany, Conrade, and Frederic Barbarossa, made another effort to recover the Polish crown. The attempt proved a failure, and the bloody contest ended with the death of Wladislas, while he was on his road to Poland to engage in another civil war. Boleslas, now being firmly seated on the throne, and having no wars on his hands, resolved to make war on his northern neighbors, the Prussians, and compel them to abandon their heathen superstition and embrace the Catholic religion. He marched his army into Prussia, and, with his sword in one hand and the Catholic creed in the other, offered his new religion as the only alternative of death; but, after several battles, in which he at last was defeated, learned by sad experience that the sword was not designed for the propagation of the Christian religion. He wisely occupied his few remaining years in secular affairs, until his death in 1173. During this reign, European chivalry and the Crusades agitated and convulsed the eastern continent; while Henry, the younger brother of Boleslas, embarked in the enterprise, at the head of a numerous army of Polish volunteers. But one campaign cooled his martial religion and returned him to Poland; for which short service, the monks puffed him as one of the greatest champions of the Holy Cross.

For four years after the death of Boleslas IV., Mieczylas, his third brother, held the sovereign power of Poland, during which time nothing worthy of any particular notice in history occurred.

Mieczylas II. having been dethroned by the discontented Poles, Casimir II. was crowned in 1178. He was the youngest brother of Boleslas IV., and reluctantly ascended the throne, preferring to remain the subject of the tyrannical Mieczylas; but all his entreaties to remain in private life were disregarded by the Poles, and served only to confirm them in their choice. He was a mild, amiable, and humane prince, although he had been engaged in several wars with the Russians, in which he distinguished himself for his courage, clemency, and benevolence. He was one day at play, and won all the money of one of his nobility, who, incensed at his ill fortune, suddenly struck the prince a blow on the ear, in the heat of his uncontrollable passion. He fled immediately from justice; but, being pursued and overtaken, was condemned to lose his head. The generous Casimir determined otherwise. "I am not surprised," said he, "at the gentleman's conduct; for, not having it in his power to revenge himself on fortune, no wonder he should attack her favorite in me." The generous sovereign very kindly discharged his enemy, returned him his money, and at the same time reproached himself for setting the pernicious example of gambling, so ruinous in its consequences. This sovereign was a father to his people; and, viewing the cruelty of the nobles to the serfs, frequently expressed his regrets that he had not the power to abolish slavery, and elevate all his subjects to a higher grade of moral excellence. He was every way worthy of the name bestowed upon him by his people: "CASIMIR THE JUST."

After several successive and unimportant reigns, Wladislas III. came to the throne in 1306. He was surnamed Lokieteck, on account of his diminutive stature, which means an ell in height. He was deposed, and after five years was rëinstated in his sove-

reignty. The regal title had been formally revived in 1296, by one of his predecessors; but the Polish nobility refused to confer it on Wladislas until he had proved himself worthy. The invading Teutonic Knights soon gave the prince an opportunity of displaying his talents as a warrior. The Teutonic Knights were a military order in Russia, and continually infested the northern frontier. The Germans who accompanied Frederic Barbaroesa, emperor of Germany, in the Crusades of 1188, being left by his death without a leader, were formed by Henry, king of Jerusalem, into a religious and martial order, called the Knights of St. George. This title was subsequently changed to Knights of St. Mary, and afterwards to Teutonic Knights of the Hospital of St. Mary the Virgin. They were required to be of noble parentage, and to defend and promulgate the Catholic religion. In the beginning of the thirteenth century, Culm, in Prussia, was given them, on condition that they would use their arms against their pagan neighbors. This injunction they soon violated, and, after conquering all Polish Prussia, they built Marienburg, invaded Poland, and overran Pomerania. Wladislas, after the Pope had denounced them, checked their ravages; and, after several battles, in which the Poles were victorious, and four thousand of the Knights were left dead on the field, with thirty thousand auxiliaries laid low by their sides, the Polish sovereign bound the remainder of them by rigorous treaties. After distinguishing himself in these battles, he returned to his coronation at Cracow, which was approved by the Pope. The form of the ceremony continued the same from this time. The archbishop of Gnesne placed the crown on his head, and a white eagle, which was the ornament of his throne, became the national arms. After a short interval, he died in 1333.*

* Fletcher, 36. The history of the Teutonic Knights will be given in the chapter on Religion.

Casimir III. ascended the throne on the death of his father. He had received instructions from his parent, a short time previous to his death, to protect his country from the invasions of the Teutonic Knights. The new sovereign soon had a rupture with them, which finally resulted in a treaty. In his wars with Russia, he redeemed his country from the power of that monarchy, and the greater portion of the modern Polish province, Russia Nigra, was then added to Poland. Casimir the Great—for such he was justly called by his grateful subjects—also meritoriously earned the title of "Polish Justinian," on account of the wise and salutary legal reforms which he made in the jurisprudence of his country. He was one of Poland's great and good sovereigns, and did more for the improvement of his subjects and country than any other sovereign, except Sobieski. He was the devoted friend of the slaves; and did all in his power to relieve their misfortunes, and improve their degraded condition. Like many other benefactors of men, his worthy character was the target of slander; but his superior moral excellence secured him immortal fame.

On the death of Casimir, in 1370, without any heirs to the crown, his sister's son, Louis, king of Hungary, was called to the throne of Poland. Louis was the sovereign of another kingdom; and the Polish nobles, jealous of foreign dictation, and apprehending their interests would be compromised to those of his foreign subjects, compelled him to make certain stipulations, as a safeguard against these suspected evils, before they would consent to his coronation. In addition to the former coronation oath, which merely bound the monarch to preserve the interests of his people, was added the *Pacta Conventa*, which was the Magna Charta of Poland, and was ever afterwards administered to the Polish monarchs. It required him to resign all right to most of the exten-

sive domains of the crown, and make them the benefices of his officers, or starostas, whom he could not remove without the consent of the senate, or assembly of nobles. He bound himself not to exact any personal service, not to impose any taxes, declare war, nor interfere with the authority of the lords over their slaves. These legal restraints reduced the power of the Polish sovereignty to a constitutional monarchy; and made the king little more than a guardian of the laws. Louis readily acceded to these terms, and as readily violated them after receiving the crown. He resided continually in Hungary, and, in violation of his coronation oath, and against the remonstrances of the Poles, filled all the principal offices with his Hungarian subjects. These royal outrages caused great disturbances, and the surrounding nations, taking advantage of the discord, made frequent incursions, until the death of Louis relieved the Poles, in 1382, and thus ended the dynasty of the Piasts.

Section III.

SOVEREIGNTY OF THE JAGELLONS.

Louis having died without any male heirs, and after an interregnum of two years,—in which the claims of Sigismund, Marquis of Brandenburg, who had married the elder daughter of Louis, were resisted—the Poles called Hedwiga, the daughter of Louis, to the throne, in 1384, on condition that she would be dictated by the nobles in the choice of her husband, and continually reside in Poland. After several lovers had made their best overtures for the hand of the Polish princess, William, her cousin, and prince of the house of Austria, who outshone all his rival candidates in the beauty of his person, in his elegant manners,

and in his magnificent retinue, succeeded in winning the *heart* of the fair princess; but her *hand* was under the control of the determined nobles. The Poles, jealous of their old enemy, the Austrians, strenuously refused their consent to the marriage of William and Hedwiga; and selected her a husband in the person of Jagellon, duke of Lithuania. His offers were too tempting to the Poles to be rejected. He promised to unite his extensive and adjacent dominions to Poland, inseparably, under one Polish government; agreed to convert his idolatrous Lithuanian subjects to Christianity; and, on these terms, Jagellon was invited to Poland, where he received his wife and crown. Hedwiga's flame still continuing to burn for her lover, William, she secretly invited him to Poland. But the stubborn Poles soon cooled the ardor of the lovers, and, sending William home, placed the love-sick queen under the guardian care of the military guards. She at first played the woman well, and refused to see Jagellon; but the threats of the nobility, and the glitter of the sabres, together with her imprisonment, soon transferred her love from William to Jagellon; and thus the poets' philosophy of the immutability of female love was, once at least, falsified.

Jagellon was married and baptized by the name of Wladislas IV.; and Lithuania and Poland were united under one crown. This duchy was an immense accession to the geographical magnitude of Poland, extending from Poland on the west, beyond the Dnieper or Borysthenes on the east, and from Livonia on the north; but, on the whole, was never any benefit to Poland, and became a serious moral evil, and bone of contention. The idolatry, ignorance, and ungovernable obstinacy of the Lithuanian nobility, proved to be a continual annoyance to the Polish government. Jagellon found it more difficult to unite the thrones

and crowns of different nations, than the hearts and hands of lovers. His Lithuanian subjects were slow to coalesce with the Poles, and still more reluctantly refused to adopt the Roman Catholic religion. Jagellon improved the laws of Poland, and was compelled to fight, preach, and legislate. He was for a long time involved in war with the Teutonic knights, who were continually encroaching on his dominions, and defeated them in a severe and well fought battle at Grunewala, in 1410, and dictated to them the terms of peace.

On the death of Jagellon in 1433, his son Wladislas V., only nine years of age, was elevated to the throne of Poland. His mother, and some of the nobles, were his guardians during his minority. Immediately on leaving his pupilage, he made his first military *début*, in a campaign against the Turks—the old and bitter enemy of Poland—who were defeated by the youthful hero, with a loss of thirty thousand men. He concluded a treaty of peace in favor of Hungary and Poland; while Wladislas received the Hungarian crown, as a compliment and reward for protecting it from the grasp of the Turk. Flushed with his success, and regardless of his treaty, which the dispensation of the Pope allowed him to violate, the young prince again advanced against the Turkish swords, in which act of injustice he fell, and the Moslem crescent waved triumphant. Thus expired this brave and talented, but rash and improvident Polish king, in his 21st year, 1444.

The reign of Casimir IV., who succeeded his brother Wladislas, forms a brighter period in Polish history. This distinguished sovereign spent nearly forty-eight years in the service of his country, extending its territory, conquering its enemies, framing its constitution, and advancing civilization and learning. Pro-

fiting by the fate of his predecessor, he was disinclined for war, except when necessary for the defence of his country. The first part of his reign was peaceful; but those old inveterate enemies, the Teutonic knights, again invaded his territory, which called him from his peaceful retreat into the tented field, to measure swords with this formidable enemy, whom he soon conquered. After they were defeated, the knights submitted, and entered into a treaty, by which they surrendered all Polish-Russia, and retained the remainder as a fief of Poland. This newly-acquired territory Casimir formed into four palatinates, under the government of Poland; except certain commercial privileges granted to the trading towns. Dantzig, Thorn, Elbing, and Culm, were great acquisitions, in consequence of their mercantile importance. Dantzig was one of the principal Hanse-Towns commanding the commerce of the Baltic; and Casimir granted it the exclusive privilege of navigation on the Vistula. Moldavia being tributary to Poland, the kingdom had the means of uniting the commerce of northern and southern Europe. Casimir, after a long reign, in which he distinguished himself and improved his country, died in 1492.*

John Albert was a prince of courage and policy. Under the advice of Buonacorsi, an Italian, formerly his tutor, and now his confidential adviser, he attempted to lessen the power of the nobility in the political scale, and improve the condition of the lower class, by interposing between them a third class—or the *tiers-état*—and thereby create a firmly-balanced government like England. But the plan, although wise, was made known before sufficient time had elapsed to mature and develop it; and, therefore, not only proved a failure, but so enraged the jealous nobles, as to

* "Tableau de la Pologne," by Malte Brun.

render Albert ever after extremely odious to them. After his failure to improve the government, he made some improvements in the judiciary.

Alexander, the successor of Albert, came to the throne in 1501; and during his reign the crown was greatly debased. He was not allowed to raise money or use the revenue, without the consent of the diet. This law, called *Statutum Alexandrinum*, was passed to prevent the king from patronizing music and the fine arts, of which he was passionately fond. Under this sovereign, Chancellor Laski revised all the Polish laws, whose name the code bears.

The reign of Sigismund I. commenced in 1507, full of trouble and anxiety. Faction had sprung up in different parts of the kingdom, but the new king, approaching it slow and sure, ultimately succeeded in restoring peace. The Lithuanians, who were always in trouble, having revolted, had taken to themselves Russian auxiliaries, whom the Polish king soon subdued. This victory was won in a great measure by the artillery, which was now, for the first time, introduced into the Polish army. Albert, Marquis of Brandenburg, and nephew of Sigismund, had been elected master of the Teutonic order, for the purpose of preserving peace between the Poles and the knights; but as soon as his office was secured, he traitorously turned his heel against the Polish sovereign. He was soon conquered, chastised, and removed from office. This was a death-blow to the Teutonic knights, who were expelled from Prussia, and compelled to retire to Mariendal in Franconia. Sigismund formed eastern Prussia into a duchy in 1225, and bestowed it on Albert as a fief. Polish, or western Prussia, was afterwards called Regal Prussia, to distinguish it from the duchy. While the king was fighting a foreign foe, he

had one far more formidable at home. His wife, Bona, the prime mover of factious intrigues at court, had gained the complete control of her royal husband, using him as the automaton of her foul game. The king summoned the nobility to assemble at Leopol, or Lemberg, in Gallicia; but they occupied their time only in complaints against the queen and the administration. This assembly they styled *Rokosz*, in imitation of the Hungarians, who in public emergency held their legislature in the plain of *Rokosz*, near the city *Pest*. This meeting proved the precursor of others more disastrous. Sigismund was a distinguished prince, and has left a name worthy of himself.

As soon as Sigismund Augustus, or Augustus I., the son of the previous monarch, came to the throne, the pugnacious nobles were ready to quarrel with him, for marrying without the consent of the diet. He had married Barba Radziwill, a widow of a Lithuanian noble, without much distinction; which connection had been secretly contracted before his father's death, and first made publicly known on his ascending the throne. But in spite of all the threats of the aristocracy, and the earnest solicitations of the Archbishop of Gnesne, to divorce his wife, he remained faithful to his conjugal vows until her death, which occurred in about six months, and settled the question. Although Sigismund, like his royal predecessors, had his full share of war, yet he found time to cultivate the arts of peace, and extend his dominions. In this reign, Livonia and Courland were annexed to the Polish crown, which proved an important accession to the kingdom. The order of the Knights of Christ had the same statutes as the Templars, and was founded in 1202 by the Bishop of Riga, who gave them the third part of Livonia, which they agreed to conquer and convert to Christianity, under the sanction of the Pope. The order

was denominated *Ensiferi*, by Winno, the first grand-master, who formed a solemn compact with the Teutonic knights, and adopted their statutes in 1238. In 1521, they purchased their independence of the grand-master of the Teutonic order, after reducing Livonia and Courland. The power of the knights now began to diminish very fast, under the irresistible influence of the Reformation, which was spreading rapidly in Livonia. They had imprisoned the Bishop of Riga, Sigismund's cousin, and brutally massacred the envoys sent by the king to demand his release. Provoked by this wanton insult and cruelty, Sigismund prepared to visit them with his vengeance; but his enemy, fearing to encounter him, submitted, and formed an alliance with Poland. This treaty aroused the ire of the Czar of Moscow, who invaded Livonia, but was repelled by Sigismund, to whom the knights had applied for assistance. Livonia was surrendered to Poland in 1561; and Kettler, the grand-master, held the duchy of Courland as a fief, on condition that, as vassal to the king, he would furnish him with two hundred horse, or five hundred infantry, and not maintain more than five hundred regular troops.

The war with Russia, in which Sigismund was engaged, terminated in the consolidation of the union between Poland and Lithuania. At the commencement of hostilities, the Czar was victorious, and invaded Lithuania; while the Polish nobles refused to march to the assistance of their fellow-subjects, except on the condition that the union should be consummated; which was done in 1569, in the diet of both provinces at Lublin, under the same laws, privileges, and government. The union of Lithuania and Poland being now complete, it was agreed that the diets, composed of representatives of both these countries, should meet at Warsaw, a central town. Sigismund Augustus, the last of the

dynasty of the Jagellons, which continued for one hundred and eighty-six years, died in 1572. During this time Poland attained its full growth, and highest state of national glory, if we except the subsequent reign of Sobieski.

Section IV.

SOVEREIGNTY OF THE ELECTIVE KINGS.

The crown now became *formally* elective, although, in fact, it never was otherwise; for the sovereign was always the creature of the nobility, and their votes crowned or dethroned him at pleasure. After an interregnum, during which the archbishop of Gnesne presided, the factions, rivalry, and malevolent ambition of the aristocracy—rather than elect one of their own number king—made choice of a foreigner, Henry, Duke of Anjou, son of Catharine de Medicis, and brother of Charles IX., the king of France. Henry's election failed to benefit the Poles. He had hardly seated himself on the throne of Poland, when he heard of the death of his brother, the reigning king of France. The rigorous exactions of the jealous Poles, in requiring him to yield to the toleration of the Protestant religion, which he had bitterly persecuted, and reside continually in Poland, in a measure had cooled his ardor for Polish sovereignty, and satisfied him, that he could not retain both crowns; and consequently, he preferred the French throne, to which he was entitled on the death of his brother. Sensible that the Poles would hold him to his coronation vows, and that he could not reside in France and retain the crown of Poland, he wisely resolved to abdicate Polish sovereignty, and retain his French throne. Accordingly he left

Poland secretly for France; and, although he was overtaken by the Polish nobles a few miles from Cracow, he resolutely pursued his journey, and refused to remain longer in Poland.

The abdication of Henry again let loose all the base passions of the Polish nobles, in their wars and strifes for the vacant throne. The friends of Maximilian of Austria were active and clamorous for the election of their favorite candidate; but were finally overpowered, and compelled to yield to the claims of Anne, the sister of Sigismund, with Stephen Batory, Duke of Transylvania, for her husband, who ascended the throne in 1575. Batory was a prince distinguished for a high order of talent, with rare intellectual and moral attainments, having raised himself by his valor and merits to the dukedom of Transylvania, which rendered him highly acceptable to the Poles, as their sovereign. Nor did his virtues end with his coronation vows; but he ever continued through his reign to promote the greatest good of his subjects, as far as he could. He distinguished himself in a series of battles with the Russians, in all of which he was victorious; and secured a treaty of peace by the interposition of Possevin, the Jesuit, and legate from the Pope. This circumstance introduced the Jesuits into Poland. This order being distinguished for its learning, Batory supposed he could promote the educational interests of his subjects, by surrendering to them the control of the University of Wilna; but their subsequent conduct disappointed the expectations of the king, and proved them to be unworthy teachers and useless peacemakers. This king adopted the policy of establishing a standing army; introduced an improved system of military tactics; and succeeded in subjecting the Cossacks to military order. Having formed the design of extending the regal authority, his plans were frustrated

by death in 1586. Few monarchs have reigned in Poland more successfully and more acceptably than Batory; and he well deserved the title conferred on him by his people—"*In republica plus quam rex.*"

After the nobility had again exhausted their fury in the quarrels of another election, in which Maximilian of Austria, and Sigismund, Prince of Sweden, were candidates; the party of Sigismund III. prevailing, elected him to the throne, and made his rival prisoner in 1587. The successful prince humanely discharged Maximilian without a ransom, magnanimously saying, "I will not add insult to misfortune; I will give Maximilian his liberty, and not oblige him to buy it." Sigismund's family was related to the Jagellons on the female side; a connection highly pleasing to the Poles. His reign—as usual with his predecessors—commenced with war. The Cossacks, who had become dependents of Poland, were continually harassing the Turks; and the latter, unable to chastise these annoying hordes of savages, who were ever on the wing like wasps, resolved to hold the Poles responsible for their outrages. After several fatal battles, with nearly equal success on both sides, a treaty of peace was made by the mediation of the English ambassador. On the death of Sigismund's father, the king of Sweden, which happened about this time, Sigismund III. succeeded to the throne, by royal bequest. This event was the beginning of a living trouble, which, by its various ramifications, seriously embittered the remainder of his days. Two crowns, especially such as the kings of Sweden and Poland wore in those stormy times, were crushing to any sovereign. The Swedes, who had generally adopted the Reformed religion of Luther ever since the time of Gustavus, were jealously awake to the dangers they seriously apprehended

from such a cold, bigoted Catholic as Sigismund. Nor did their anxious fears prove to be groundless. He associated with him a popish legate, as his prime minister, by whose advice he founded a Roman Catholic church in every town, and resolved to be crowned by the pope's deputy. These religious innovations excited the ire of the Swedes, and open rebellion resisted all his tyrannical efforts, to carry out his purposes by Polish troops. Sigismund, failing in his religious usurpations, now turned his ambition in another direction equally unworthy, by espousing the cause of Demetrius, an impostor, and a young claimant of the Russian czarship, whose life forms an interesting chapter for historical romance.

The Czar, John II., of Russia, left at his death a son, Demetrius, only nine years old, and another, by the name of Theodore, aged about twenty. The latter ascended to the throne of Russia on the death of his father; while his brother, Demetrius, continued in the care of his mother, who superintended his education in the retired castle of Uglitz. Theodore soon married the sister of Boris, one of his principal officers, who shared profusely in the choicest favors within the gift of his new relation and sovereign. The base ambition of this degraded ingrate was only rendered more corrupt and desperate by the royal munificence; and, on the death of the czar, there remained only one obstacle between him and the throne, which he found in the person of young Demetrius. He soon surmounted this difficulty, by disposing of the young prince, who immediately disappeared in a mysterious manner, and Boris finally ascended the throne. But the glitter of a crown, and the intoxicating gaiety of the Russian court, failed to stifle the convictions of the assassin's conscience, and the horrors of remorse thundered in his ears

"Demetrius! Demetrius!" The murderous king, constantly haunted, whether asleep or awake, was told that Demetrius was still living, and that he had mistakenly murdered another child. A Demetrius was at this time found in Poland, who proved a more powerful tormentor to the royal wretch than all the stings of remorse. This young man acted over the same tragedy, which was played by the slave Clemens, in the day of Tiberius, and by Perkin Warbeck in the reign of Henry VII. Nature seemed to lend a helping hand to the imposture, by a similarity in age, by making one arm shorter than the other, and by placing a wart on the cheek of both. These similarities, as a capital for the commencement of his imposition, who, it seems, was originally a monk, together with the unsettled state of Russia, and the difficulty of detection, encouraged him in the nefarious enterprise. He associated himself with Mniszech, palatine of Sandomir, in Poland, whose character for integrity was very low, and promised him assistance, if he would tolerate the Roman Catholic religion in Russia, and marry his daughter Mariana.

Sigismund would not openly advocate the cause of the impostor, but allowed his nobles to act for him; and, by their aid, Demetrius, the impostor, was seated on the Russian throne. But the Russians soon rebelled, and murdered him with many of his Polish coadjutors. Soon another impostor, by the same name, arose, who was received and defended by the Poles as eagerly as the first. Mariana regarded him as a resurrection from the dead, and Mniszeck used him as another stepping-stone to royal power. This farce was acted even the fourth time. Sigismund, by the advice of the Jesuits, who now had the control of him, invaded Russia, under the pretence of avenging his murdered subjects. Zolkiewski, the maternal great-grandfather of John Sobieski, who

was made both chancellor and grand-general, commanded the Polish troops, and entering Moscow, took Basil Schoüisky, the new czar, and his brother, prisoners, and placed the king's son, Wladislas, on the throne. He was soon deposed, and Sigismund made no effort to restore him.

Sigismund, still intent on his plan of regaining the crown of Sweden, joined with Ferdinand, the emperor of Germany, and aided him against the voyvode of Transylvania. But the Transylvanian being in alliance with the Sultan, the Poles were defeated by the Turks, while under the command of the famous Zolkiewski, the conqueror of Russia, who fell on the banks of the Dniester, near the town of Mohilow. His son was taken prisoner, but both bodies were redeemed, and buried in the same grave, with this inscription—

Exoriare aliquis nostris ex ossibus ultor.

"This voice from the tomb urged their descendant, John Sobieski, to exact retribution from the Turks." A fresh war now opened between the Poles and the Turks; and the Sultan, at the head of his troops, was defeated, and obliged to make peace.

Poland now had a double engagement on hand—the Turks in the south, and the Swedes in the north. Sigismund still harbored the thought of regaining the crown of Sweden; but he found a superior in Gustavus Adolphus, who was now on the throne; and after many years of war and disastrous fighting, the Polish sovereign was glad to make peace, and surrendered Livonia and part of Prussia, in 1629. The troublesome and bloody reign of Sigismund terminated in 1632. The silly dupe of the hypocritical Jesuits who controlled him, lost his paternal kingdom, and nearly ruined the Polish nation, who had adopted him.

The religious toleration of Poland was abolished, and Protestants were deprived of all places of trust and power, while cruel Catholicism was reigning triumphant, with her garments crimsoned in the blood of civil war. The nobles had formed a religious and political confederation against their king, in 1607, which had been matured, but not yet generally known. In 1609, these confederations were legalized—the spirit of contention divided house against house, and father against son—the serf's chains were riveted stronger by intoleration, and religious faction laid an embargo on all commerce. Such were the fruits of the reign of the bigoted and obstinate Sigismund III.

Wladislas VII., the son and successor of Sigismund, after the death of Gustavus Adolphus, compelled Sweden to resign its conquests, and enter into a firm treaty of peace at Stumsdorf, in 1635; and, had the new king continued to pursue the same wise and prudent policy during his reign, he would have saved his country from a long train of serious disasters. The king occupied the remainder of his reign in war with the Cossacks. The Polish nobles were ever jealous of the independence of this wild race, and resolved to reduce them to the condition of serfs. The Jesuits, who could not endure the thought of their adherence to the doctrines of the Greek Church, determined to convert them, sword in hand, to the Catholic faith; and the king, who was the mere political tool of the nobles and Jesuits, resolved to cut down what little liberty the Cossacks had. The development of this tyrannical purpose for ever alienated these wild and lawless hordes from Poland, and made them a most cruel foe. Wladislas erected forts in the Ukraine, to awe them into subjection; and the Cossacks immediately armed in defence of their liberty. In violation of their treaties, the Poles were guilty of murdering

their hetman, and others they had taken prisoners, in the most barbarous manner. The Polish nobles acted on the principle, that treaties and oaths were not binding longer than they served their ambitious and capricious interest. Treaty after treaty was made and broken by the contending parties, till, at length, these repeated acts of injustice drove the Cossacks again to rebel, who were obtaining victorious advantages when death relieved them from the tyranny of Wladislas, in 1648.*

John Casimir, or Casimir V., the younger brother of the late king, was called to the throne, equally distinguished for his bigotry and vice—a Jesuit in principle, education, and character. The nobility of Poland continued their cruel oppressions on the Cossacks; and Casimir connived at their injustice, till, at length, their notorious villany roused them to another revolt. Chmielnicki, a man of notoriety and power in the Ukraine, having been unjustly deprived of his little farm by the Polish governor, resented the insult, and asserted his right. The governor adding injury to injury, carried off his wife, and burned down his house, in which his slumbering infant was consumed. Chmielnicki drew his sword, and joined the Cossacks, as their leader, to revenge his wife's dishonor, the death of his child, and the destruction of his home. But Casimir, believing the Cossacks were the aggrieved party, refused to prosecute the war, and restored the hetman to his office by way of conciliation. The Cossack chief withdrew his forces, and entertained negotiations of peace, which were soon broken off by the refractory nobles, who again renewed the war. The Cossacks chastised them severely, and crimsoned their march with the slaughter of the pugnacious aristocrats, while they advanced into Poland, and surrounded the king in his camp

* Sobieski, I., 205.

at Zborow. This war, in which the Poles were again defeated, ended in a new treaty in 1649, securing to the Cossacks the free enjoyment of their rights and religion.

The treaty-breaking nobles, as usual, again disregarded their solemn contracts, and renewed the war against the Cossacks, with an army of 100,000 nobles, and 50,000 of their foreign troops, who had served in the thirty years' war. This outrage drove the Cossacks to ally themselves with the Tartars. Victory, for a short time, declared in favor of the Poles, and a new treaty was made in 1651. The Cossacks, smarting under the pains of injustice and oppression, joined Russia in 1654, and, reinforced by their new allies, again declared war with the Poles. While the Russians were ravaging Poland on the east, Charles Gustavus, king of Sweden, invaded on the north, with sixty thousand troops, in revenge of Casimir's pretension to his crown; and entering Warsaw, became master of Poland, while the cowardly Casimir fled to Silesia. In 1656, the mutable nobles again confederated with their fallen sovereign, and the treaty of Olivia was concluded on the third of May, 1660, between Poland, Prussia, and Sweden, in which Casimir resigned all pretensions to the Swedish crown, and ceded Livonia to Sweden.

Not satisfied with the wars and misfortunes of the past, the Poles declared war with the Arians, who had sided with Sweden, and persecuted them by confiscation, exile, and death. They again declared war with the Cossacks, in violation of the treaty of 1658, which caused a permanent union of the Ukraine and Russia, and ultimately crushed the Polish nation. The Poles, for a time, resisted the Russians, under the command of the great John Sobieski, but were finally compelled to make a treaty of peace in 1667, in which Servia and the Ukraine, on the

east of the Dnieper, were ceded to Russia; and the Cossacks or Zaporienses, were to remain under the joint dominion of both nations, to serve either, against the Turks, when required, with the free exercise of their religion.

This was an unfortunate reign for Poland in all its domestic and foreign relations. The king was the creature of his queen, his mistress, and the Jesuits; while many of the nobles were planning a revolt, and the dethronement of their sovereign. At length, Casimir, worn out with his perpetual wars, the treason of the nobles, and the intrigues of his court, abdicated his throne, and retired to France, where he ended his days. His last address to the diet was in the following words:

"PEOPLE OF POLAND—It is now two hundred and eighty years that you have been governed by my family.—The reign of my ancestors is past, and mine is going to expire. Fatigued by the labors of war, the cares of the cabinet, and the weight of age; oppressed with the burdens and solicitudes of a reign of more than twenty-one years, I, your king and father, return into your hands what the world esteems above all things—a crown; and choose for my throne six feet of earth, where I shall sleep in peace with my fathers."

It was in this king's reign that the *liberum veto*, or privilege of the deputies to stop all legislative proceedings in the diet, by a single dissent, first became a law.

The throne being vacant by the resignation of Casimir, Michael Koribut Wiecnowiecki was elected to the throne, after a period of strife between rival candidates, in 1669. He was a descendant of the Jagellons; and shrinking from the quarrels of the crown, retired to a monastery in Warsaw, hoping to live in peace and die without distinction. The senators, disappointed

by the election of one of the inferior nobles, resorted to every artifice to embarrass the administration of this feeble prince. Michael, resenting their insolence, disregarded the *pacta conventa*, and married an Austrian princess, the archduchess Eleonora, without consulting his intriguing diet. Soon after his coronation the Cossacks revolted; and, after being defeated by Sobieski, they applied to Turkey for aid. The nobles had early commenced their factious plans for dethroning Michael, and placing a French prince on the throne. This was a conspiracy of the aristocratic nobles against the inferior nobles; the latter being now in power. But these political quarrels were suspended for a season, by the appearance of Mohammed, the old enemy of Poland, who was met by Sobieski, and would have been severely chastised, but for the disgraceful treaty of peace proposed by Michael, which rendered the remainder of his reign a scene of insult, danger, and great anxiety.

After the death of Michael, which happened in November, 1673, John Sobieski, the most distinguished sovereign of the Poles, ascended the throne. The imbecility of the Polish crown, and the democratic madness of the people, appear most conspicuously in the history of John Sobieski. This distinguished prince was emphatically the Washington of Poland. His virtues and talents, his public and private acts excelled all his predecessors and successors. His military attainments had no equals at home, and but few abroad. This eminent defender of Christendom, starting with only fifteen thousand men to defend his country from Mohammedan invasion, by his herculean efforts, previous to the battle of Chocim, found himself at the head of forty thousand troops, not one half of them disciplined; and with this feeble force he attacked eighty thousand Turkish vete-

rans, strongly intrenched, well armed and disciplined, and, battling with this fearful odds, gained the greatest victory ever achieved by Christian arms since the battle of Ascalon. The victorious troops which this hero led to the deliverance of Vienna, consisted of only 18,000 native Poles, and the whole Christian army numbered only seventy thousand soldiers on duty; yet with this comparatively feeble force, stimulated by his mighty genius, he routed an army of three hundred thousand Turks, and by this shivering blow, subdued the Mussulman power so effectually, that for the first time, during a period of three centuries, the glory of the Mohammedan crescent began to wane; and from that period, history dates the decline of the Ottoman empire. Notwithstanding all these glorious triumphs, the former democratic tyranny and savage equality of the Poles again returned; the old *veto* quarrels and domestic strifes were revived; the republic was paralysed, the defence of the frontier was again in the hands of a few undisciplined horsemen; and the Polish nation, demented by their barbaric levelling system—a national egotism—added to their long and black catalogue of offences, the meanest and foulest of all crimes—the sin of ingratitude to their heroic king—the deliverer of Christendom. They basely permitted him to be besieged for months, with only fifteen thousand men, by innumerable hordes of barbarians, before the sleeping, equality-dreaming pospolite advanced to his relief.*

On the death of Sobieski, and after a severe quarrel for the throne between the friends of the two rival candidates—Frederic Augustus, elector of Saxony, and the prince of Conti—the consequence was, that on the 27th of June, 1697, both were elected by their different political partisans; the archbishop declaring

* The life of John Sobieski will be found in the chapter on great men.

Conti king, and the bishop of Kuiavia, Augustus. The ten thousand Saxons which Augustus brought to his coronation settled the contest in his favor, and the prince of Conti had leave of absence. But several difficulties in the way of the coronation were yet to be surmounted by Augustus. The royal regalia were locked up in the treasury at Cracow, under the care of public officers in Conti's interest; and although the law forbade breaking open doors, the Saxons evaded it by breaking down the walls. The services of the archbishop to perform the ceremony were necessary; but he, being in the opposing interest, was removed, and a new one appointed. The funeral of the late king must necessarily precede the coronation of his successor, and the corpse was in the hands of Conti's friends at Warsaw; but the foxy Saxons substituted an effigy, and Augustus II. was crowned king of Poland. This compulsory and fraudulent election was the first of a disgraceful series of similar events, which finally reduced the Poles to the tyranny of Russia, Austria, and Prussia, and destroyed Polish sovereignty. The proffered assistance of the Russian czar and the king of Sweden was declined by Augustus, who found his Saxon guards more reliable. The *pacta conventa* required Augustus to dismiss his own troops; but his fears of the rebellion of his unwilling subjects caused him to resort to the expedient of retaining them as a protection from the Turks, which was a sufficient excuse to the Poles. When the treaty of Carlowitz, in January, 1699, terminated this Turkish war, he employed his Saxon forces in a shameful and aggressive war on Sweden. His first battle was unsuccessful, and he engaged Peter the Great, of Russia, to assist him. Peter embarked in the enterprise willingly. This unjust alliance was formed at Birze, in 1701, after fifteen days of drunkenness and debauchery of the

two monarchs, which deprived thousands of their lives, their fortunes, their husbands, fathers, brothers, and sons, in an unjust war, planned and decided in a drunken revel of these two unprincipled debauchees. But Heaven, who raised up Charles, the young Swedish monarch, and fought his honest and victorious battles, chastised these two licentious and drunken monarchs severely. This young hero entered Birze, where his dethronement had so recently been planned by Peter and Augustus, and gradually and irresistibly advanced on Augustus in Poland, resisting all his overtures of peace, and the arts of his mistress, the Countess Konigsmark, while Augustus cowardly fled before him, until the young Swede entered Warsaw, without opposition, May 5th, 1702. Augustus fled to Saxony, taking with him James Sobieski and his brother Constantine, sons of the late king, in order to prevent Charles from placing either on the throne. Charles offered the Polish crown to Alexander, Sobieski's third son, who declined it, and Stanislas Leszczynski was called to the throne by a formal election under the dictation of Charles. The honey-moon of royalty had hardly passed with Stanislas, when the alarm-bell of Warsaw announced the return of Augustus, with twenty thousand Saxons, in search of his lost crown. Stanislas fled to Charles for protection, and, after several well fought but most disastrous battles between Charles and Schullemburg, the general of Augustus, the latter retreated to Saxony. Charles immediately pursued him; and Augustus, trembling at his approach, submitted to a treaty dictated by Charles, in which he resigned all pretensions to the crown of Poland, surrendered all claims on Sweden, discharged the two Sobieskis, and Stanislas again ascended the throne. Peter the Great was highly exasperated at this treaty, and the Russians, under the command of

Menzikoff, overran Poland in the absence of Charles and Augustus, who were in Saxony; while the czar was engaged in raising a standard for the ex-king of Poland, in plundering his opponents, in ravaging the country, in levying contributions, and robbing the Poles of all the property he could find. But the Russian foe soon retreated on hearing that Stanislas and Charles were returning from Saxony. The Swedish warrior, leaving Stanislas in Poland, pursued the czar into Lithuania, in the month of January, 1708, where the fortune of war turned against the royal Swede, robbed him of the hard and bloody earnings of nine years' victories, drove him into a Turkish asylum, and hurled his protegé Stanislas from the Polish throne. This was a bright day for the waning royalty of Augustus, who, on hearing the unexpected news of Charles's fall, immediately returned to Poland, and resumed his crown, notwithstanding his former renunciation, under the sanction of the pope. Stanislas, despairing of further success, retired to Swedish Pomerania, which province he defended against the combined forces of the Russians, Saxons, Poles, and Swedes. Augustus wishing to terminate the contest, Stanislas agreed to abdicate with the consent of Charles, which was not easily obtained. The Swedish exile induced the Turks to take up arms against the Russians, and surrounding Peter on the banks of the Pruth, drove him into the famous treaty of 1711, by which he agreed to withdraw all his troops from Poland, without ever interfering in the affairs of that government again, and secure Charles a safe return to his kingdom.

Augustus, jealous of his fickle crown, seized upon the return of the Swedish monarch as a pretext for retaining the Saxon troops in Poland, which was far from being a satisfactory excuse to the discontented Poles, who avenged the insults and ravages

of these oppressive intruders, by slaying hundreds of them. These fatal conflicts led to open war between the king's troops and the Polish confederates, which Augustus tried in vain to quell; and after his army was almost annihilated, he again invoked the power of the czar. The terror of the approaching Russian army induced the confederates to negotiate, and peace was again concluded between Augustus and his people in 1717. In pursuance of this treaty the Saxons left the kingdom, and the Polish army was reduced to eighteen thousand men. This policy was a destructive step in the history of Poland, and left the defence of the country almost entirely in the hands of the *pospolite*, who were inadequate for the defence of the state against the large standing armies of the neighboring nations.* Peter and Charles had become friends by the all-controlling influence of their common interest, by planning a general invasion of Europe, and placing Stanislas on the Polish throne again—a conspiracy which was defeated by the death of Charles, and Augustus was thereby relieved from the greatest anxiety for his disputed throne. Poland now enjoyed several years of peace, until the disputes about Courland, in 1726, threatened the revival of hostilities. This duchy had been held as a fief of the Poles since 1561, on condition that when the line of succession failed it should revert to Poland. The diet held in 1726, considering the old age of the duke from whom the reins of government had been seized by Ann—the niece of Peter the Great, and the wife of the duke—resolved to annex it to the kingdom; and accordingly sent commissioners to divide Courland into palatinates. The Courlanders immediately made violent resistance, and elected Count Maurice of Saxony, the natural son of Augustus, as their duke; a choice equally offen-

* 1 Rulhiere. 154.

sive to the Poles and Russians, who treated it as a nullity, and the duchy remained under the control of Russia till the death of Augustus. Augustus, after spending the remainder of his days in idle attempts to make the crown hereditary, and extend its prerogatives, terminated his eventful reign on the 31st of January, 1733, whose death relieved the Poles from another tyrant. The character of this king was a compound of vice and folly, mingled with avarice, cowardice, and inactivity. In the first part of his reign he distinguished himself by violating the laws, and undermining the constitution of his country; and occupied the latter part of his life in corrupting the morals of his subjects. His court was sumptuous and licentious, and his cardinal virtues were drunkenness, gambling, licentiousness, and falsehood. His reign rapidly hastened the fall of the Polish kingdom; and learning and religion waned rapidly during his administration. The elegance of his person, and his great physical strength, are the only characteristics of this sovereign worthy of commendation.

The Poles now resolved to place Stanislas again on the throne; and on the 11th of September, 1733, the unanimous vote of sixty thousand nobles made him king of Poland, in spite of the interference of Russia and Austria, to assassinate him on his return from France to Poland. But Russia and Austria were too formidable an enemy to be foiled in this way. Russia immediately marched an army of sixty thousand men to the old battle fields of Sarmatia, plundering as they went, easily overcoming the small Polish army, which had been reduced to fifteen thousand undisciplined men; and the new king of the Poles could only leave them to the mercy of their enemies. Stanislas, as usual, again fled on the first fire, and sought refuge with his nobles in Dantzig, the only city in Poland prepared for a siege. The Russians, after

meeting with some resistance on the Vistula, fought their way to Warsaw, and forcibly assembling a few Polish nobles, some of whom were brought in chains, elected Augustus III. king of Poland. After this farce of manufacturing sovereignty at the point of the sabre, they advanced to Dantzig to make sure of Stanislas. This gallant city defended itself with great obstinacy for more than five months; and, after eight thousand of the assailants had fallen, despairing of the promised aid of France, the city was finally surrendered by treachery. Stanislas left the city in the disguise of a peasant, and fled to Prussia, where he was kindly received by Frederic I.

The war between Louis and the emperor ended in a treaty at Vienna, October, 1735, by which Stanislas was restored to the possession of his hereditary estates, to the title and honors of king of Poland, and the duchies of Lorraine and Bar, which after his death were to descend to the French crown; his partisans were reinstated in their estates and dignities, and Stanislas renounced all claims to Poland. With a mind well stored with philosophy, and a heart experienced in grief and the mutability of royalty, he retired to his new sovereignty. The intellectual and moral excellence of Stanislas was not surpassed by any Polish sovereign. He lived to the advanced age of eighty-nine, when he died, February 23d, 1766.

Under the advice of their exiled king, the Poles finally united in a Diet of pacification in 1736, by which they still secured the freedom of speech, declaring it a capital offence for any one in future to invite the aid of foreign troops; and the dissidents were deprived of all power, being excluded from all participation in the government.

Augustus now considered himself firmly seated on his throne.

His passion for amusements, society, and hunting; his luxurious magnificence and extravagance, disqualified him for the important duties of a prince. He was a good-natured, handsome, virtuous man, though his princess was one of the ugliest women of the kingdom. Too indolent and ignorant to act and think for himself, he surrendered himself entirely to the influence and dictation of his prime minister, Count Brulh, whose servility consisted in pleasing the king and participating in his pleasures; while to others, he was excessively proud and rude. To this royal minion, Augustus intrusted all the affairs of government, in order that he might enjoy his pleasure without interruption. His favorite residence was in Saxony; and, as he was obliged to return to Poland during the sessions of the Diets, he sought every opportunity to suspend them by the *liberum veto*. On one occasion, the Diet continued longer than usual; and, being unable to force a *veto*, he searched the Polish laws, and on discovering that it was illegal to legislate by candle-light, he ordered his partisans to continue the debate till night, and then call for candles. They were brought, and immediately the Poles exclaimed against this violation of law, and the Diet was dissolved. Such was the almost invariable close of the sessions, during the thirty years' reign of this sovereign. The consequence was, all public business was at an end, the chief officers acted as they pleased, foreign courts were without ministers, and the voluptuous pospolite, neglecting all military exercises, were without army or discipline; and soon become a useless mass of idle men, equally incapable of commanding or obeying.

While the king and most of his subjects were thus indulging in idleness and pleasure, some of the more active and powerful nobles were plotting the overthrow of the government. At the

head of this party we find the two princes Czartoryski—Augustus and Michael, a branch of the Jagellon family. The former was palatinate of Polish Russia, and had acquired great wealth by marrying a rich widow. This accidental circumstance gave him great influence and numerous partisans. His brother Michael was equally powerful, though of a different character, being grand-chancellor of Lithuania, and grand-master of all intrigues. So consummate was his skill in party politics, that he could rely on more than one hundred thousand nobles to carry out any of his treasonable designs. In addition to all these facilities, their sister had married the Count Poniatowski, who distinguished himself as a firm friend of Stanislas and of Charles XII. Each of these three brothers had an eye to the throne, but their intentions were so studiously secreted from each other, that they avoided all collision. They were on terms of friendship with the Swedish monarch, with Russia, Augustus, and his prime minister, Brulh.

Such was the political condition of Poland in 1752, when France and England were using every means to secure the alliance of the several courts of Europe, on the eve of the revolutionary war of the American colonies. The English minister, desiring the union of Russia, Saxony, Austria, and Poland, readily united in the plans of the Czartoryskis, who promised to further his designs. France had already engaged in the conspiracy; and, amid all these political intrigues, plots, and counterplots, the last remaining fragments of Polish sovereignty were annihilated on the death of Augustus, October 5th, 1763.

The sovereignty of Poland, subsequent to the death of Augustus III., as found in the reign of Stanislas Poniatowski, was the foreign sovereignty of Russia, Austria, and Prussia; but not

Polish sovereignty. It is manifest from this brief history of Polish sovereignty, that it was exclusively an aristocracy of the worst kind. And although its form was nominally changed from an absolute to an elective monarchy, yet, in fact, the nobility elected the king, and governed both him and the country; and were, in truth, the real sovereigns of Poland. All that now remains of Polish sovereignty, are the crown and throne of that unhappy people—the sad emblems of departed royalty. These sacred relics of once powerful Poland, are now deposited in the treasury of the Russian czar at Moscow, as trophies of his former victories, for the gratification of national ambition and idle curiosity.* There hangs the crown of Poland, of polished gold, surmounted by a cross, a solitary, faded, and fallen memento of departed glory. In the same repository of national heirlooms, royal reliques, and military trophies, stands the throne of departed Poland, covered with blue velvet, but faded with sadness; studded with golden stars, which once glittered, but now are dimmed with grief! Such is the history, character, and fate of Polish sovereignty; over which the hardest heart need not blush to drop a tear.*

* Stephens, II., 82, 83.

† See Salvandy's Hist. de Pologne, avant et sous le roi Jean Sobieski, 1829. Hist. des Revolution de Pologne, par M. C. l'Abbé Fontaines, vol. 2, p. 128. Rulhiere Hist. de la Pologne. Connor's Hist. Poland.

CHAPTER III.

PROGRESSION.

General Principles of Progression—Polish Progression—Their Pastoral Life—The Poles continue unaffected by Foreign Progression—The Poles made very little Improvement.

The law of progression is universal and inflexible in its demands on all creation. It claims the homage of the mineral, vegetable, and animal kingdoms; and requires the obedience of all the intelligent creation, mortal and immortal. Improvement, progression, advancement, development, and reform, are stamped on every part of creation, on every department of science, and every sequence of events. Nothing remains stationary. Progression or retrogression, improvement or degeneration, success or ruin, life or death, is the common lot of all creation; and nations are not an exception to the general rule.

This universal law, in some instances, may be lenient to the disobedient, and punishment may be long delayed; but the day of judgment is sure to come. And there is a time in the history of disobedience and retrogression, beyond which the pardoning power does not extend, and from which there is no reform. When this point is reached, ruin and death are the final results, as in the fall of Poland. The true rule of progression distin-

guishes between destructive innovation and useful improvement. The former is satisfied with reckless change, regardless of permanent utility and the general weal; while the latter delights in the general good of all, and perseveringly aims at perfection.

By this principle, no valuable acquisition is lost or impaired; but, holding fast to the good established, supplying deficiencies, and refusing only what is clearly wrong, the utility of the past is symmetrically united with the salutary reforms of the future, in a beautiful and sublime whole.

In conformity to these general laws, and under the supervision of their Divine Author, the arts and sciences have advanced far beyond the predictions of Bacon and Newton. Arnot and Somerville have reduced the physical sciences to the capacity of the school-boy. The fair sex, including Hemans, Sigourney, and their literary sisters, have caught the poetic fire of Milton, Pope, Byron, and Moore, while De Staël, Hannah More, Edgeworth, Sedgwick, Fanny Forrester, and others, have been equally successful in prose. "Carnot has organized victory," and Napoleon has reduced the art of war to a question of science. Steam has bridged the oceans around the world, and abolished the distinction between hills and valleys. A voyage from New York to China is no longer a serious question of labor, time, and space, as in by-gone days, but to modern enterprise, is an excursion of pleasure—a mere holiday. Morse has taught man to communicate his thoughts, and hold converse with all parts of the globe, with the rapidity of lightning. The compass has covered the waters of both hemispheres with the canvas of all nations, in the pursuits of commerce, wealth, civilization, literature, and religion; while the press brings daily to every man's fireside, the thrilling news of every continent.

The law of progression seems to prevail in the great work of creation. Geology and the Mosaic history harmonize in their testimony, that the creation, formation, development, and present perfection of our globe, have been the progressive work of more than six thousand years. From the first creation of its original particles of matter, this earth has passed through several successive stages of existence—commencing with its nebulous formation —then a liquid chaos—next an opake crusted body—afterwards clothed with vegetation—from vegetation it advanced to animal existence; and finally became the "home, sweet home," of man—the most wonderful part of creation, and lord of the whole. And if we give a fair hearing to astronomers, who have surveyed the heavens with their telescopes, the conclusion is almost irresistible, that the great work of creation is still going on, and the Divine Architect is daily forming in the heavenly regions, new nebulæ, new planets, suns, stars, comets, and other heavenly bodies, and filling infinite space with new monuments of His infinite power and goodness.

The mineral kingdom sparkles with specimens of progressive productions. There is more classical truth than fiction, in the thought, that minerals which first crusted the earth's surface, before the creation of man, may now be glittering in the jewels of female beauty.

By progressive civilization, man emerged from his brutal condition, to his present elevated and refined situation in civilised society. The history of civilization naturally branches out into four different successive periods: first, the age in which man employs only his own corporeal powers, as in the barbaric and savage state of society: second, the period in which he employs the labor of animals, as in half-civilized society: third, the period

in which he uses the power of wind and water, as in a civilized, commercial society: fourth, that period in which steam and electricity are used, for commercial purposes, as in the nineteenth century.

Nor has medical science slumbered in the nineteenth century. The plague, small pox, cholera, and other pestiferous diseases, have been disarmed of their terrors; the scalpel has reached every organ of the human body; insanity has been subjected to medical laws; and life has been prolonged beyond its limits of three score years and ten, by the skill of Good, Bell, Cooper, Mott, Dunglison, Beck, and others, conspicuous in the healing art.

Moral science is not an exception to the great law of reform and improvement. Nothing is more progressive than our moral interest. And although the natural arts and sciences have advanced, with the rapidity of lightning, and the expansive force of steam, yet the moral sciences have left them far in the rear. The Christian religion, after an irresistible and persevering contest of nearly sixty centuries, has made its first revolution around the globe, and commenced its second course of reformation in Asia, the land of its nativity. For reasons unknown to us, but doubtless well understood in High Heaven, "where more things are known than our philosophy contains," the religion of the Bible has progressively pursued its preferred course from east to west, until its waves again wash the shores of Euphrates, in the vicinity of Eden—the birth-place of man, and the school of his first lessons in moral science.

Religion has always advanced hand in hand with civilisation, government, law, and the arts and sciences; and what Heaven has joined together, we know of no dispensation for "man to put

asunder." Moral reform is now, for the second time in the history of man, lighting up the fires of science and religion in Judea, China, and Egypt; while Asia and Africa again begin to loom in the East, after so many centuries of almost total darkness. The schoolmaster and missionary are abroad in the wilderness and desert; and who can calculate the results of their second journey around the earth? Who can give us the arithmetic of the future progress of morals, science, and government?

Standing, as we now do, midway between the two great epochs in the history of the world—the beginning of the nineteenth, and the commencement of the twentieth century—our position gives us peculiar facilities for moral observations, by the signs of the times; and by comparing the present with the past, we may thus calculate the future with unerring certainty. Fifty years ago vast continents were shrouded in the darkness and cruelty of heathenism, and innumerable islands of the sea were peopled with cannibals, and fiends in human form. Millions of human beings, capable of literary and moral refinement, were wandering barbarians, and degraded heathen idolaters, worshipping the vilest and most venomous reptiles, without one ray of science, civilization, or religion,—without any food but their acorns, without any home but their dens and caves. The nineteenth century commenced without any missionary labors, except a few small preliminaries of the Roman Church, of the Danish and Moravian Christians, and the efforts of a few in England and America, for the amelioration of the American Indians. In the history of moral progression, the first half of the nineteenth century will ever be known as the *missionary age*. Within this period, including the preparations made in the last six years of the eighteenth century, two thousand missionaries have been sent to different parts of the

heathen world, and upwards of seven thousand native assistants have been employed in teaching and preaching. At least four thousand churches have been organized, containing two hundred and fifty thousand communicants; and three thousand missionary schools have been established, in which two hundred and fifty thousand heathen children receive daily literary and religious instruction! And all these sublime and almost miraculous institutions and improvements are on the very soil where, fifty years ago, not a single school, not a single scholar, not a church nor a convert, not a missionary nor a teacher existed! At the opening of the present century the whole world contained only four millions of copies of the Bible, the moral text-book for the world; now there are in useful circulation more than thirty millions, which can be read by more than one half the population of the earth. Then the Scriptures had been published in fifty different languages; now they are read in two hundred tongues and dialects! Then they were read by two hundred millions of souls; now by six hundred millions. Fifty years ago not one dollar was contributed for the support of foreign missionaries; now two millions of dollars are contributed annually for that beneficent and humane object. And all this herculean labor of moral progression, with a few exceptions, has been performed by Great Britain and the United States of America.

Nor is this all. The science of government has advanced with equal rapidity. The highest degree of perfection in government, ever known in any nation, exists in the United States of America, where twenty-five millions of freemen are governed by the principles of a sound democracy, based on liberty, equality, fraternity, benevolence, reciprocity, and law, producing the greatest good to the greatest number. In canvassing the several nations of the earth,

we find the history of national progression embraces four successive periods: First, The preparative period, embracing the early emigration and colonization of the primeval inhabitants of the nation; second, The formative period, when the colonies are organized into a regular government; third, The confirmative period, when the government becomes so firmly established as to be in no danger of dissolution; and, fourth, The perfecting period, during which the nation and its government are progressively elevated to its highest glory in civilization, science, wealth, and religion. The preparative period of Great Britain continued from its first settlement to the reign of King Egbert, in the eighth century; the government was organized under Egbert in its second period; it was confirmed in the seventeenth century under William and Mary, in its third period; and has been progressing in the work of perfection ever since, which constitutes the fourth period, to the present time. The American Union commenced its first period at the landing of the Pilgrim Fathers on Plymouth Rock, and continued through the colonial period, to the adoption of the constitution in 1789; the second period dates from the adoption of the constitution, and continues through its formative period to its confirmation on the declaration of peace in the last war with Great Britain, which was the third great era in her national existence; and since the close of that war, the republic of the American States has been rapidly perfecting and progressing in its fourth great national period, until she now stands at the head of all other states and nations in national splendor and excellence.

The extraordinary history and deplorable condition of Poland arose, in a great measure, from their want of progression. Poland has retained, until a very recent period, through a varied

history of more than fifteen hundred years, all their original independence and equality of savage life. It is a remarkable fact, that their love of savage freedom was never subdued or modified by the progressive civilization of the surrounding nations; nor did it in the least retard the improvement of the neighboring states. The equality and valor of their original pastoral character, in their native plains, remained unchanged to their latest day, without mingling with modern urban liberty, and unaffected by the institutions of civilized society. The inclinations and passions of their savage character have remained unaltered amid the mingled tastes, the intelligence, and blood of the vanquished nations, exhibiting in bold relief the original state and equality of pastoral life.

And here we may learn, with unerring certainty, what must inevitably have been the fate of all the northern European nations, if their savage, fierce, unbending temper, and the anarchy of their Diets, had not yielded to the progressive improvement of modern civilization, literature, government, laws, and religion. Their passion for barbarous freedom, which controlled the shepherds who wandered in the plains of Sarmatia, consisted in leading a life free from all control,—in roving at pleasure over boundless plains,—resting and departing when, where, and with whom they chose,—increasing daily their number of miserable captives, over whom they ruled with the same savage tyranny which characterized all their actions. "Such as Poland then was, it has ever since continued, a race of jealous freemen and iron-bound slaves; a wild democracy ruling a captive people."

"*Ferrea juga*
Insanumque forum."

Vienna, the frontier station of the Roman empire, never

extended into the Sarmatian forests, and hence arose the repeated misfortunes of their descendants. The glory of modern Europe is greatly indebted to the infusion of Scythian freedom into the decaying provinces of the Roman empire, and the union of savage energy with antiquated civilization. In Poland only, barbaric independence continued unaffected by foreign admixture; and their manners, customs, laws, and religion, from the earliest ages, remained unchanged through all their history, down to the time of the partition of the kingdom. The tastes, habits, manners, and customs of the primeval nomad tribes have continued the same to a very recent period.*

Their language, manners, and dress, the frequent use of furs, the flowing pelisse, caps made of the skins of wild beasts, the absence of linen, and the magnificence of their arms; the singular crown of hair, which in the early days of the Scythians encircled their bare heads, the passion for a wandering life, travelling in the country, and passing from one encampment to another, have been, in every age, the leading characteristics, manners, and amusements of the Polish noblesse. And, what is still more surprising, the great and good Sobieski employed his last years in these erratic occupations.†

The unfortunate Poles learned too late these terrible lessons, by the sad experience of many centuries of disastrous and severe schooling. After the dismemberment of their territory, the remnant of the kingdom roused from their long slumbers, and vainly attempted to amend their constitution,—abandoned the *liberum veto*,—and the nobles, taking the lead in the work of reform, voluntarily and patriotically surrendered all their preferred privileges for the public good. The wilds of Sarmatia were lighted up with the

* Salvandy, Hist. of Poland: I., 107, 108. † Salvandy, I., 39.

republican council-fires of the French revolution; and on the third of May, 1791, they adopted a new constitution, based on a constitutional monarchy, with an hereditary throne, abolishing the odious *liberum veto*, granting religious toleration, the emancipation of the bourgeois, the progressive enfranchisement of the serfs, and other constitutional laws, which were proclaimed at Warsaw, with tears of grief for the past, and smiles of joy for the future,—hoping that at last they had found a final period to their long continued misfortunes. But it was too late. Their period of national probation and day of reform had passed. Their enemies were too strong; the surrounding nations had lost all confidence in them—if, indeed, they ever had any—and Poland was too weak and too low to be raised again to the elevated standing of an independent kingdom.

Like many erring mortals, they had discovered their faults too late, and they had pursued their youthful errors down to that awful period, when repentance and reform were denied them. Had they listened to the dying speech of Sobieski, and made that a starting point of reform, instead of deferring it to that unfavorable period in the reign of the artful, ambitious Catharine, Poland would now rank next to America, as a free, republican government.* All the efforts of the immortal Kosciusko to redeem and save his country were in vain, and with him Poland expired.†

From the reign of Piast to the final dismemberment of their kingdom, a period of more than eight hundred years, we find very little improvement in their sovereignty, aristocracy, slavery, representation, assemblies, army, wars, society, literature, govern-

* See Sobieski's last Speech in the Senate.

† Alison, I., 355.

ment, laws, wealth, religion, democracy, and politics; while all their institutions, the moral and social condition of the people, their agriculture, civilization, and commerce, remained substantially the same—a monument of national folly and individual degradation—exhibiting a melancholy and demoralizing contrast with the rapid improvements of contemporary European nations.*

The argument of the Poles against all change and all progression was, that those institutions which come down to us with the hoary age of antiquity, bear conclusive evidence of utility on their face; and their great age entitles them to respect, and should shield them from the hand of innovation. This old stereotyped argument of monarchy and aristocracy the world over, is sound in substance, and in no way conflicts with the true rules of progression, and, therefore, proves nothing. The friends of improvement concede, that institutions of great antiquity frequently possess great utility, and should not be destroyed, but improved. And what ancient institution, civil or religious, can be named, that is not susceptible of great improvement? Every gift from the hand of our Maker, is received in an imperfect state, doubtless for the purposes of human culture. It is the genius of reform, to embrace the wisdom of the past, with the utility of the present, and the good of the future, in one united whole; without sacrificing anything, except useless and superannuated antiquities, superfluous prospects, and idle hopes. An institution which has nothing but age to commend it to our veneration, and protect it from improvement, has no better claims to perpetuity than the Egyptian hieroglyphics would have, to supersede the refined philology of the nineteenth century.

* Alison, I., xvii. See Lelewel's Essai.

Because monarchy and aristocracy have played the ruthless tyrant over the masses, for nearly six thousand years, without any other right than *might*, it is no reason why the people may not, after so many centuries of abuse, resume their lawful sovereignty, or commit it to more worthy hands. True democracy asks for no change, no improvement, save what will secure the greatest good to the greatest number; and who can complain of a request so modest and so reasonable? Try all things, prove all things, and hold fast to that which is good, is the true rule of progression; and so long as reformers govern their improvements by these principles, they will never be obnoxious to the charge of reckless innovation. The only true tests of all measures of reform and progression, are intrinsic excellence, and practical utility; and wherever these laws are obeyed, progression is not only safe, but highly beneficial.

CHAPTER IV.

REPRESENTATION.

Origin of State Representation—Legislation by the Masses without Representation—Its Effects—The *Liberum Veto*—Its Consequences—Efforts to adopt a State Representation in Poland—Its Failure.

MONTESQUIEU is mistaken in supposing that government representation had its birth in the woods. It has a higher and better origin. This is one of the many useful institutions for which the State is indebted to the Church. This choice production never grew spontaneously in the forest, under barbaric culture. Polish and savage equality had nothing resembling parliament and representative assemblies. The eastern republics of antiquity, and the more modern pastoral nations of the north, had no idea of the exercise of the rights of freemen by the representative system, through the elective franchise, except by the concourse of all the citizens, possessing equal legislative rights and powers.

Legislation by the masses, when the country became populous, could only be exercised by the proximate, wealthy, and ambitious few; while the remote citizens, who had not the means of conveyance, and were not ambitious for office, had no voice in the legislative halls, and, of course, soon became disaffected with

the government, and were ready for revolt. Hence, their fabric of liberty was founded on too narrow a foundation for public utility and long continuance.

The assemblies of the Champs-de Mai, as well as the earliest legislatures of the Normans in England, were attended by all the freemen, who held of the king; consisting of 60,000 Norman horsemen, assembled at Winchester, to deliberate and legislate with their conqueror, concerning the affairs of the vanquished kingdom. Such was the original representative system, in all the European states, and such has always continued to be the character of the Polish Diet.

It was reserved for the Christian Church, the common school in which the fundamental principles of national progression were first taught amid the ruins of the ancient institution of savage equality, to suggest to the state a representative system of government, which has advanced through various improvements, and now secures and represents fairly and equally the interests of every citizen, rich and poor, high and low, through the medium of equal rights of suffrage; containing all the vital principles of liberty; adapted to every member and function of the nation, and circulating freely through every vein and artery of the national body, preserving the freedom and energy, but avoiding the evils of massive democracy.*

The Christian councils of the Church were the first examples of representative assemblies known in history. Here we find assembled and represented in the same legislative hall—on the floor of the same parliament—within the walls of the same congress, the whole Roman world; a priesthood embracing the civilized earth, by means of delegates, to deliberate and resolve

* Salvandy, I., 107, 108.

on the interests of the universal Church. In the course of national improvement and development, the state gladly followed the example of the Church, and adopted her republican system, in a modified, but improved form. At length, all Europe revived from her national slumbers, and shaking herself, like a lion, from the dews and fogs of the morning which followed the dark ages, established gradually, but firmly, a representative system on a broad and permanent basis.

Modern nations progressively borrowed the customs of the Church; which, from time immemorial, had been the sole depository of the principles of democracy, government, and learning. These principles, though for a time vanquished by the arms of barbarians, under the fostering care of the Church, under the modest, but courageous and persevering instructions of the clergy, finally flourished in the councils of Nice, Sardis, and Byzantium, many centuries before they were heard of in the heathen world. They were found in the catacombs of ancient Rome, during the suffering times of the primitive Church, thousands of years before they were known in ancient Germany. And, although the state may rightfully claim its independence of the Church—a claim which the latter has never disputed, and has no interest to deny—yet the State should never forget her many and lasting obligations to the Christian religion for her representative system, and many of her most valuable institutions.

Centuries after representative assemblies had been established in Germany, France, and England, the Poles adhered to their ancient custom of summoning every freeman to discuss, sword in hand, the affairs of the republic. In this manner, a legislative body of more than one hundred thousand horsemen met in the plains of Volo, near Warsaw, to deliberate on public affairs, and

make laws for fifteen millions of souls. The distractions of these massive, ignorant, and stormy diets, as the natural result of cause and effect, weakened and injured the nation more fatally than all the wars and invasions of their foreign enemies.

The right of every freeman to assemble in person and legislate for the nation, was preserved by this fierce, unbending, retrograding people, as the Magna Charta of Poland. This ungovernable assembly,—the proprietors of the soil,—embodied the military strength of the nation in war, and its legislation in time of peace. In these rude assemblies, all the public concerns of the kingdom,—the private feuds,—the grievances and legal rights of individuals; all questions of war and peace,—the formation of laws,—the division of military plunder, and the election of the sovereign, were all discussed and settled, sword in hand, by the unanimous vote of every individual of these assembled hordes. The first and all absorbing principle in Polish politics was, that the will of a freeman was a thing of absolute sovereignty, which no human power should attempt to control; and ought not to be subjugated to the will of the majority, however numerous or wise. On this democratic, but erroneous doctrine, was engrafted the fundamental principle of all their deliberations, that *unanimity* was essential to every resolution, and every legislative act. A principle so impracticable, unphilosophical, and ruinous as this, would very naturally lead its advocates to another kindred, but still more savage law, of massacring the recusant.

This cruel relic of savage equality was productive of the great majority of national evils which befell this unfortunate republic. And yet, so blinding and deceptive are human errors and vices, that it was uniformly adhered to by the Poles, and is praised in the warmest language by their poets and historians. This bloody

parliamentary law of murdering the *nays* by the *ayes*, on the spot, and thereby securing not only a majority, but a unanimous vote, appeared to these northern barbarians an incomparably less evil than the majority principle of modern civilization. Their logic was, "these acts of violence are few in number, and affect only the individual sufferers; but if once the precedent be established of compelling the minority to yield to the majority, there is an end of all security for the liberties of the people."

Such a system of legislation, as may readily be imagined, was productive of the most disastrous discords and divisions. The ill blood which was excited by the jealousy, rivalry, and ambition of their national Diets, arrayed the different provinces of the nation, in every age, against each other, with the worst feelings of revenge and retaliation. The waywodes and palatinates into which the provinces were divided, for the administration of justice, and military preparations for war, became so divided and hostile to each other, that the earliest feuds descended from generation to generation. This hierarchy and estate of enmities descended even to private families; till, finally, hatred, revenge, and discord divided the whole republic into two parties, nearly equal in power, malice, and madness. Thus Poland fought and fell, in a common field of domestic carnage, by their own wars, daggers, and assassinations.

And yet, strange as it may seem, this principle of legislative unanimity, so ruinous to its authors, moulded and modified by the reforming hand of time, became the stock on which the sober second thoughts of an English yeomanry engrafted their far-famed jury system, which has been adopted by civilized nations generally, and is the great bulwark of English and American freedom And from the same source, modern nations have derived their

useful principle of executive veto. Here we have a clear demonstration of one of the soundest doctrines of philosophy, one of the fundamental laws of government, that the same principle, when applied to the few, may be highly useful; but ruinous when extended too far.

At length, finding it utterly impossible to carry on anything like a civil government by these massive assemblies of one hundred thousand citizens on horseback, all claiming an equal voice in legislation, and embarrassed with the difficulty of procuring a comfortable subsistence during their protracted sessions, the nation was finally driven to the only alternative of attempting the representative system.

This change occurred for the first time, in 1467, about two hundred years after it had been established in England, and a hundred and eighty after its introduction into Germany. But the intelligence, morals, government, and state of society in Poland, formed but a barren soil, in this vast wilderness and boundless contiguity of shade, for the growth of a democratic representative system. It never prevailed generally in the republic, and was fettered and loaded down with so many restrictions and insurmountable difficulties, that the people received little or no relief from it. The producing classes, the bones and sinews of every government, were not represented; and the nobility continued to exercise their rights of assembling in person, on all important occasions,—as the election of a king, and making war or peace,—which, of course, continued the jealousies of the people.

The electors, frequently alarmed by false rumors, and fearing that the powers which they had conferred on their representatives might be abused, went, sword in hand, to the legislative assemblies, prepared, if necessity or caprice should dictate, to oppose the

laws by force and arms. These furious legislatures were called "Diets under the buckler." The representatives continued to govern all their resolutions by the old unanimity principle; which power was more frequently exercised by *one*, among four hundred deputies, who had the control of a large palatinate, than by a single humble individual, surrounded by a hundred thousand assembled freemen, in the former legislative circus. The overwhelming fear of being massacred in the primary assemblies, for using the veto, was greatly relieved in the representative meetings, by the glittering sabres of the lobby-members, who were ready to protect or slaughter at pleasure.

The electors invariably exacted from their representatives a pledge how they would vote on every question that came before the assembly; and after every session held what they called *post-comitial diets*, the object of which was to call the representatives to a strict account for each vote, at the hazard of being massacred on the spot if they had in the least deviated from their instructions and pledges. These terrors compelled the deputies to adhere strictly to the instructions of their constituents, and the result was, unanimity was impossible, and legislative business consequently impracticable. To avoid these extremes, they were compelled to resort to another, equally destructive; and the majority in many instances passed their measures by main force, regardless of the minority, and in violation of the constitution.

This state of things led to civil wars; confederations of the minorities were established, new diets were organised, and new marshals elected; and the king was alternately the chief and the captive of these political factions, which in the space of two centuries entirely annihilated every other power in the government. These deputies, without any direct attack upon the throne, with-

out any open effort to wrest from the king or the senate their constitutional powers, at length succeeded in suspending and neutralizing every other branch of the legislature. The popularity of the veto power, with the increase of wealth, and the growing opulence of the aristocratic families who composed the senate, added to their other numerous embarrassments, all tend to increase our astonishment that such a government could have existed for so many centuries, or even for a single century.

The diets, previous to 1467, were composed of the general assemblies of all the nobles belonging to the army; but the great inconvenience of holding these meetings of more than one hundred thousand horsemen, obliged the Poles to adopt the representative system, then generally prevalent in Europe. Dietines, or *colloquia*, had long been held by each of the palatines in the palatinates, for the administration of justice, who now began to appoint deputies for the transaction of public business. Gradually in the course of time every district adopted the same system, and at length, in 1468, sent two deputies to a general diet. This first representative diet was convened to consider the propriety of renewing the war against the Teutonic knights. But the jealousy and opposition of the nobles to any representative system, prevented its success, and rendered it worse than useless. After the annexation of Lithuania, in the end of the fourteenth century, the whole Polish territory comprised an extent of 284,000 square miles, and was divided into Great and Little Poland on the west, Mazovia and Podlachia in the centre, with Volhynia, Podolia, and the Ukraine on the east, and Lithuania on the north-east. The inferior divisions were thirty-one palatinates and Starostys.*

* Fletcher, 50; Alison, I., xvii.; Encyclopædia Americana, X., 202.

CHAPTER V.

ASSEMBLIES.

The Rights of Polish Citizens to Assemble—Powers of the Assemblies—Their Meetings at Volo—Their Dress—General Appearance of the Assemblies—Effects of these Meetings on the People—Origin of the Polish Assemblies—The Senate—Election Laws—First Election at Warsaw—Their Deliberations and Business—Method of Voting.

ANOTHER insurmountable obstacle to the formation of a sound government in Poland, was their legislative assemblies. The right of every citizen to assemble and deliberate on the affairs of state, remained inviolate during their national existence. They preferred all the evils of their continued civil wars to the sacrifice of their visionary, massive democracy. The proverb prevailed from the earliest history of the republic: "Burn your houses, and wander over the country with your arms in your hand, rather than submit to the smallest infringement of your liberties." These radical and ungovernable assemblies combined within themselves the powers of all the magistrates, similar to the Dictatorship of ancient Rome. A Polish freeman would sooner sacrifice his country, his life, his all, than submit to a plurality of suffrages. No resolution of the Diet was binding, without the unanimous vote of all the citizens. Thus, any citi-

zen, by resorting to his privilege of the *liberum veto*, could dissolve their legislature and veto all their acts. This tyrannical law, unheard of in other nations, robed with a false democracy, equally ruinous to every citizen who invoked it, and the masses who sustained it, ultimately excavated the common grave of both. These assemblies, so famous in Polish history, far excel all the poetry and romance of the East.

The fertile plain of classic Volo, in the west of Warsaw, from the origin of the Polish nation, was the theatre of their elections and legislative assemblies. Soon the impatient pospolite covered that vast extent with its waves, like an army prepared to commence an assault on a fortified town. The innumerable piles of arms—the immense tables around which faction united its supporters—a thousand jousts with the javelin or the lance—a thousand squadrons engaged in mimic war—a thousand parties of palatines, governors of castles, and other dignified authorities, who traversed the ranks, distributing exhortations, party songs, and largesses—a thousand cavalcades of gentlemen who rode, according to custom, with their battle-axes by their sides, and discussed at the gallop the dearest interests of the republic—innumerable quarrels originating in drunkenness and terminating in blood—such were the scenes of tumult, amusement, and war—a faithful mirror of Poland—which, as far as the eye could reach, filled the extensive plain.

The arena was closed in by a vast circle of tents, which embraced within its immense girdle the plain of Volo, the shores of the Vistula, and the spires of Warsaw. The horizon seemed bounded by a range of snowy mountains, of which the summits were portrayed in the hazy distance, by their dazzling whiteness. Their camp formed another city, with its markets, its gardens,

its hotels, and its monuments. There the great displayed their Oriental magnificence; the nobles and the palatines vied with each other in the splendor of their horses and equipage; and the stranger, who beheld for the first time that luxury worthy of the last and greatest of the Nomad people, was never weary of admiring the immense hotels, the porticoes, the colonnades, the galleries of painted or gilded stuffs, the castles of cotton and silk, with their draw-bridges, towers, and ditches. On the day of election, the three orders mounted on horseback. The princes, the palatines, the bishops, and the prelates, proceeded towards the plain of Volo, surrounded by eighty thousand mounted citizens, any one of whom might, at the expiration of a few hours, find himself king of Poland. They all bore in their countenances, even under the livery or banners of a master, the pride arising from that ruinous privilege. The European dress nowhere appeared on that solemn occasion. The children of the desert strove to hide the furs and skins in which they were clothed, under chains of gold and the glitter of jewels. Their bonnets were composed of panther skins; plumes of eagles or herons surmounted them. On their front were the most splendid precious stones. Their robes of sable or ermine were bound with velvet or silver, their girdles studded with jewels, while over all their furs were suspended chains of diamonds. One hand of each nobleman was without a glove. On it was the splendid ring on which the arms of his family were engraved—the mark, as in ancient Rome, of the equestrian order; another proof of the intimate connection between the race, the customs, and the traditions of the northern tribes and the founders of the Eternal City. But nothing in this rivalry of magnificence could equal the splendor of their arms. Double poniards, double cimeters, set with brilliants;

bucklers of costly workmanship, battle-axes enriched in silver, and glittering with emeralds and sapphires; bows and arrows richly gilded, which were borne at festivals, in remembrance of the ancient customs of the country, were to be seen on every side. The horses shared in this melange of barbarism and refinement; sometimes cased in iron, at others decorated with the richest colors, they bent under the weight of the sabres, the lances, and javelins, by which the senatorial order marked their rank. The bishops were distinguished by their grey or green hats, and yellow or red pantaloons, magnificently embroidered with divers colors. Often they laid aside their pastoral habits, and signalized their address as young cavaliers, by the beauty of their arms and the management of their horses.*

The consequences of this savage extravagance were most disastrous. Those enjoying only a pecuniary competency were dazzled with the splendor of these assemblies, and, in attempting to imitate their superiors, carried on their backs in furs, jewels, and arms, their entire fortunes. Bribery at these elections was a common virtue, and thousands sold their votes to the candidates for the paltry pittance of a little pocket-money, and some trifling additions to their wardrobes; while the masses, with their eyes dazzled at the sight of this gaudy, ignorant, and silly aristocracy, gazed upon the demoralizing scene almost without clothing, with their long beards, naked limbs, and squalid poverty, groaning in slavish bondage, without a single hope of better days. Such is a feeble sketch of the legislative assemblies of ill-fated Poland. And this odious feature of their most miserable of all governments, was enough, and more than enough, to crush this unhappy nation.

* Rulhière, Hist. of Poland, I., 18, 24; Salvandy, II., 190—197.

Wladislas first assembled his nobles in a Diet in the year 1331, and the example was followed by his successors. These assemblies, at this time, were composed of the high or influential nobles, usually known as the most aristocratic class; and the numerous barons who held the title of nobleman, and were known as the democrats—a distinction more nominal than real. Previous to this period, the assemblies consisted of all the nobility and barons, who assembled when they pleased, to transact public business, irrespective of the king's orders.*

In the reign of Casimir IV., the senate confirmed the decree, that the king should not make war without their permission. In the year 1467, the Polish Parliament or Diet was organized. Anterior to this, the senate consisted only of the bishops and great officers of the kingdom, who formed the king's council, subject to the control of the nobility; and the Diets were composed of the nobles generally. From this time dates the commencement of the Polish representation. These assemblies, as in the reign of Sigismund, not unfrequently occupied their sessions in railings against the king and queen, and dissolved under the slightest pretext, as a shower of rain, without any action for the public weal. In the reign of John Casimir, in 1652, the *liberum veto*, or the privilege of the deputies to stop all proceedings in the Diet by a single dissent, first assumed a legal form; and a Polish noble named Sizinski, reduced it to practice, by leaving the Diet before the vote was taken, and thereby prevented any action.†

During the session of the Diet called by the archbishop of Gneme, in the interregnum which succeeded the death of Sigismund—which was called to elect a new king, in 1573—the election laws

* Fletcher, 42. † Fletcher, 49—51.

were first passed. On the motion of John Zamoyski, representative of Belz, in Gallicia, a law was passed granting all the nobles a vote in the choice of their king; and the plain near Warsaw was designated as the place for the meeting of the future assemblies. At the same time, also, the old coronation oath, or *pacta conventa*, was revived. The principal articles were the same as ever afterwards were administered to the kings elect; depriving the monarch of all active power, making the crown elective, and requiring regular sessions of the legislative assemblies every two years. The king was bound to observe perfect toleration of religious principles; and the nobles agreed, for themselves and their posterity, never to take up arms on account of religious disputes. The Roman Catholic religion was recognized as the established faith of the government, and the sovereigns were required to embrace it.

Under these laws, the nobles, for the first time, convened at Warsaw, armed and equipped with all their military pomp and retinue, as if they were on the eve of battle. These assemblies, however, generally disregarded all law, and were controlled by a reckless and wilful obstinacy—the ambition to rule or ruin; and, finally, in the waning existence of the nation, were governed by the terror of foreign foes, and compelled to act under the military dictation of Russia and their conquerors.

The field of Volo, so celebrated as the place of the election of the Polish kings, is about five miles from Warsaw; and was formerly surrounded by a ditch with three gates,—one for Great Poland, one for Little Poland, and one for Lithuania. It was so arranged, that in the middle were two inclosures,—one of an oblong shape, surrounded by a rampart or ditch, in the centre of which was erected, on the day of elections, a vast temporary

building of wood, covered at the top and open at the sides, which was called the *kopa*, occupied by the senate; and the other was of circular shape, called the *kola*, in which the nuncios were assembled in the open air. The nobles, generally numbering from one hundred and fifty thousand to two hundred thousand, encamped on the plain in separate bodies, under the banners of their respective palatinates, with their principal officers in front on horseback. The primate, having announced the names of the several candidates, kneeled down and chanted a hymn; and then, mounting his caparisoned, dashing charger, galloped pompously round the plain, and received the votes. The nobles did not vote individually, but each palatinate in a body.*

It was necessary that the election should be unanimous; and a single nobleman peremptorily stopped the election of Wladislas VII. Being asked what objection he had to him, he answered, "None at all; but I will not suffer him to be king." After being by some means brought over, he gave the king, as the reason for his opposition: "I had a mind to see whether our liberty was still in being or not. I am satisfied that it is, and your majesty shall not have a better subject than myself." If the palatinates agreed, the primate asked again, and yet a third time, if all were satisfied; and, after a general approbation, he three times proclaimed the king; and the grand-marshal of the crown repeated the proclamation three times at the gates of the camp.†

It was the exercise of this high privilege of electing their own king, which created and sustained the lofty bearing of the Polish nobles, inducing the proud boast, which, in a moment of extremity, an intrepid band made to their king: "What hast thou to fear

* Stephens's Travels in Greece, Turkey, Russia, and Poland, II., 223, 224.
† Stephens, II., 225.

with twenty thousand lances? If the sky should fall, we would keep it up with their points." But, unhappily, although the exercise of this privilege was confined only to the nobles, the election of a king often exhibited a worse picture than all the evils of universal suffrage in England and America. The throne was open to the whole world; the nobles were split into contending factions; foreign gold found its way among them, and sometimes they deliberated under the bayonets of foreign troops. Warsaw and its environs were a scene of violence and confusion, and not unfrequently the field of Volo was stained with blood.*

* Lelewel's Essay on the Civil and Criminal Legislation of Poland. Connor's History of Poland, II., 82.

CHAPTER VI.

ARMY.

Origin of the Polish Army—Compensation of the Army—Origin of the National Army—The Cossack Army—Organization of the Army—Their Dress and Arms—Their Character and Condition—Polish Legions.

The business of war is the principal occupation of a barbarous people, especially in their early nomadic existence, as in Poland The government of such a rude people is uniformly arbitrary, organized and defended by a savage soldiery, and eventually yields to a military despotism. As the state advances in civilization and refinement, the army becomes a subordinate branch of the government, and equally essential, whatever be the form of the government, and however savage or civilized the people. Peace-making was no part of the business of the early Polish chiefs; and the subsequent kings pursued the profession of their predecessors. As far back as history and tradition can trace the annals of the Poles, and their early predecessors, the profession of arms was their principal pursuit; booty was their only reward, and their weapons the only baggage with which they encumbered themselves. During the reign of Boleslas, between 1103 and 1139, the *pospolite* or militia of Poland was first established. Every palatinate, of which Poland proper contained eleven, was obliged to raise a certain number of cavalry within a

stated time, to be subject to the king's orders. All the army, at least those who fought on horseback, were styled nobles. In the reign of Batory, which commenced in 1575, the strength of the nation was augmented by the establishment of the first standing army, and the introduction of military tactics.*

One of the most powerful divisions of the Polish army was the Cossacks, or *plunderers*, as their name implies. Batory was the first prince who reduced this formidable foe to some military order, in the latter part of the sixteenth century. It was that Cossack tribe called Zaporog, or Cosaci Zaporohenses, that was first reduced to military order in Poland. These savages inhabited the islands and swamps of the Dnieper, which served as a barrier and common frontier between them and their warlike neighbors. In the reign of Sigismund I., they were first armed against the Tartars, under their commander and governor, Daszkiewicz, a Polish officer; and from this time they continued unnoticed, until the time of Batory. The Cossacks were the southern borderers of Poland, and like all other savages of their character, were continually carrying on an irregular and predatory war. All the inhabitants of the Ukraine, which means the frontier country, were, in the course of time, called Cossacks. They were only a military body, and not a nation, as some have erroneously supposed. Chevalier, very properly, compares them to the Francarchers, who were formerly established in France by Charles VII. It was their business every season to make periodical naval expeditions against the Turks, and they frequently advanced within two leagues of Constantinople. Their rendezvous was in the islands of the Dnieper; and when winter approached, they returned to their homes. Previous to the time of Batory,

* Fletcher, I., 21, 32, 43, 63.

they generally mustered five or six thousand men. Their war boats were sixty feet long, with ten or twelve oars on each side. They were principally of Russian origin, together with many criminal refugees from Poland, Germany, and other countries. They professed the religion of the Greek Church. Their residence was in those naturally fortified places which are watered by the Dniester. Their sole business was war; and, when not engaged in actual service, they occupied themselves with athletic sports, preparatory for the field. They lived by hunting and fishing, and gained their principal support for their wives and families by plunder. They were governed by a prefect or hetman, whose sceptre was a reed, and who was chosen by acclamation in a tumultuous assembly. He was associated with four town counsellors, with the absolute power of life and death. The Poles gave them the Trychtymirow, in Kiovia. They were well fitted for maritime warfare by long continued habit. Their navigation was carried on by means of boats, with flat bundles of reeds fastened to the sides, to buoy them up, and resist the violence of the waves and winds. With these boats they sailed with great rapidity, and frequently captured Turkish vessels in their piratical voyages. Formerly, as late as the time of the father of John Sobieski, who describes them very graphically, not many of them used lances; but they were all furnished with arquebuses, and, in this kind of warfare, the kings of Poland could match the infantry of all the monarchs in the world. One of their usual military fortifications consisted of their camps, with waggons ranged round in several rows, called *tabor*, which were made their last refuge from an overpowering enemy. The Poles were obliged to furnish them with arms, provisions, and forage, for their horses. In the year 1576, Batory divided them into six

regiments, and appointed superior and subordinate officers over them. They were only infantry, until Batory joined to them two thousand horse, and in a short time they became principally cavalry. Their hetman or ataman, or chief, received from the Polish king, as ensigns of authority, a flag, a horse-tail, a staff, and a mirror. Rozynski was their first hetman under Batory. The Cossack army has finally pervaded Russia, and constitutes the most terrible military force in all Europe. It was this invincible army, of which Bonaparte uttered that memorable prediction which is now daily fulfilling: "Twenty years hence, and Europe will be Cossack or republican." It is greatly to be feared that the late butchery in Hungary is only the commencement of a bloody drama which will teach all Europe, by the worst experience, that Russia is indeed *Cossack*—not *Republican*.*

The Polish army reached its meridian splendor under the command of the famous John Sobieski. Under this distinguished general, the army of Poland triumphed successfully over the Russian, the Turk, the Tartar, the Cossack, and the German foe; and, for its numbers, no superior in the field could be found on the eastern continent. This hero introduced into his army the military tactics of France, which were afterwards adopted and improved by Napoleon.†

In the reign of John Sobieski, five different kinds of soldiers composed the Polish army. First—The mercenaries, including the Hungarians, Wallachians, Cossacks, Tartars, and Germans, who would have formed the strength and nucleus of the army but for their repeated revolts, which occurred on the least delay in their payments, when they invariably turned their arms against the government. Second—The national troops, to whose main-

* Fletcher, 64, Alison, II., chap. 68, p. 14. † Fletcher, 86.

tenance a fourth of the national revenue was devoted. Third—The volunteers, which embraced the levies of the great nobles, with the ordinary guards which they maintained in time of peace. Fourth—The *pospolite*, which composed the array of the whole free citizens, who, after three summonses from the king, were obliged to come forth under the banners of their respective palatines; but only to remain a few months in the field, and could not be ordered beyond the frontiers. This last unwieldy body, however brave, was totally deficient in military discipline, and, in general, served only to reveal the extreme weakness of the republic, and was, therefore, seldom called out except in civil wars. The legions of valets, grooms, and drivers, who encumbered the other armed body, composed the fifth branch of the military force of Poland; but these hordes of fierce retainers—the most warlike and irascible—injured the army more by their pillage and dissensions than they benefited it by their numbers.

All these different discordant troops were not only deficient in equipment, but were obliged to provide themselves with everything, and to collect their subsistence by their own authority in a great measure, while they were encumbered with an incredible quantity of baggage-waggons, destined, for the most part, to carry off plunder rather than to transport provisions. They had no corps of engineers; and the artillery, composed of a few pieces of small calibre, had no other officers than a handful of French adventurers, upon whose adherence to the republic implicit reliance could not be placed. The infantry were few in number, composed entirely of the mercenary and royal troops, and were regarded with contempt by the haughty nobility. The foot soldiers were employed principally in digging ditches, making bridges, and cutting down forests, rather than actual warfare.

Sobieski very early became sensible of the importance of having in his camp a considerable force of infantry; but he never was able to surmount the two great obstacles which prevented it—the prejudices of the country, and the poverty of the royal treasury.

The whole body of the pospolite, including the volunteers, the *valets d' armée*, and a large part of the mercenaries and national troops, served on horseback. It was the heavy cavalry, in particular, which constituted the strength of the armies; and there were to be found united the riches, splendor, and number of the Polish forces. This formidable body was divided into two general departments, called hussars and cuirassiers. The latter were magnificently clothed in steel, both man and horse, bearing casque and cuirass, lance and sabre, bows and carbines; while the former were defended only by a twisted hauberk, which descended from the head over the shoulders and breast, armed with a sabre and pistol. Both, however, were distinguished by the splendor of their dress and equipage, the number and costly array of their mounted servants, accoutred in the most bizarre manner with the skins of bears and other wild beasts, surmounted with huge black plumes. The loud and only boast of this fierce body was, that they were composed of men all measured by the same standard of *equality*—equal in nobility, equally enjoying the rights of obeying only their God and their swords, and equally destined to the throne of the Piasts and the Jagellons. The hussars and cuirassiers were called *Towarzirz*, or companions, which was their cognomen among themselves, and with their sovereigns, whose motto was, *Primus inter pares*—the first among equals.

The mind is relieved of all surprise that Poland, with such a motley and discordant force, was unable to compete with the steady, persevering ambition and regular forces of the surround-

ing military monarchies; and the history of Poland reveals nothing more than the usual feature of all societies, where the only principle of their democracy is a reckless aristocratic equality; which is always attended with occasional bursts of aristocratic patriotism, mingled with alternate success, dejection, anarchy, and misrule. Such a government, like a dark and stormy night illuminated only by the occasional flashes of lightning, without ever enjoying the steady radiance of the immutable sun, never recovered from the eclipse of the dark ages.

With the death of king Sobieski, the Polish army began rapidly to decline, and, under Augustus, during the incursions of Charles, the king of Sweden, in 1717, the Polish army was reduced to eighteen thousand men, under the pretence of curbing the influence of the two grand generals. This was a death-blow to the independence of Poland, for the reason that the defence of the country was left almost entirely to the pospolite, who were unable to compete with the large standing armies which were kept in the field by their hostile neighbors. By this improvident step, Poland allowed itself to be disarmed at the very moment when the worst dangers threatened on all sides; a fatal error, from which the nation was never able to retrieve itself. The ungovern able pospolite soon neglected all military exercises, and became a mere mass of men, without arms, without discipline, and equally incapable of commanding and obeying.*

In vain were all the efforts of Stanislas to restore the army to its former standing; and the herculean efforts of the immortal Kosciusko were equally ineffectual. The Polish army was in reality dead; and it is a well settled principle in the history and philosophy of nations, as well as armies, that resurrections are

* Fletcher, 148, 149.

few and far between. An army, or a nation, once destroyed, is destroyed for ever.*

Bonaparte tried his gigantic military powers in vain to resuscitate and restore the Polish army. Seventy thousand Poles marched in the colossal army which Bonaparte led against Russia in 1812; but they soon perished in the Muscovite snows, and fell with little distinction in fighting the visionary battles of the French revolution.†

But the immortal band of Polish warriors who enrolled themselves for the fight in 1831, before the walls of old Warsaw, fought the last and greatest battle which ever stained the soil of Poland; and in the presence of their country, their wives, their children, and the spirits of their departed heroes, who hovered over the field of carnage, buried their mangled bodies, broken sabres, shattered spears, and shivered arrows, in one common grave, to repose for ever.‡

The political crisis which convulsed all Europe at the close of the sixteenth century, formed an era in the military history of Poland. The people were restored to all their original, ruinous, democratic power, which their former monarchs had somewhat diminished. On the death of the last race of Jagellons, in 1573, the nation re-asserted and obtained all their former immunities. The crown lost the command of the army and the administration of justice; and two hetmans were appointed, one for Lithuania, and one for Poland. Each received the absolute command over the forces of their rival provinces; and their most glorious triumphs were frequently sacrificed to their sectional, conflicting jealousies. The administration of justice was vested in supreme tribunals, composed of the nobility, who were changed every

* Fletcher, 236 † Fletcher, 297. ‡ Stephens, II., 201.

fifteen months by new elections, which necessarily retarded the administration of justice, by leaving the judicial power in the hands of those who were destitute of experience and legal knowledge.

Two small standing armies were appointed in the latter days of Poland—one for Lithuania, and the other for Poland—of about ten thousand men, which were poorly supplied, by the jealousy of the nobility at the annual diets. In consequence of these embarrassments, the Poles never had, after Sobieski, a reliable army.

These forces were generally in poverty and destitution, without pay or discipline, and destitute of equipment. The castles and fortified towns were defended only by their walls, which were crumbling in ruins, and the empty arsenals. Yet, with all these heavy embarrassments, the Polish soldiery frequently saved the republic in the midst of the greatest perils, and several times, by their unconquerable valor, preserved the liberties of Europe from the crushing power of the Ottoman.*

But the last sad tale of the once gallant Polish army remains to be told. The unfortunate result of the glorious revolution of Poland in 1794, and the third and final partition of that unhappy country in 1795, filled Europe with Polish refugees from the army and all classes of society, who fled from their beloved homes and dear ones as a last resort for life, and eagerly joined the armies of republican France, under their great captain, Napoleon, who had undertaken the job of fighting through the battles of freedom, and of chastising tyrants throughout the world. In October, 1797, General Dombrowski submitted to the directory a plan for raising a legion of Polish patriots, to serve under the French

* Rulhière, I., 50.

general against the common enemies of France and Poland. The directory approved of the plan, but as a matter of policy advised him to lay his plan before the Cisalpine republic; and, with the approbation of Napoleon, the government of that republic agreed, in 1797, January 7th, to take a body of Poles into pay, who were allowed to retain their national costume, but were to adopt the French cockade. In April following, the Polish troops, who had organized under Dombrowski, amounted to five thousand. This fearless army served in Italy against the Austrians and Russians, where they distinguished themselves in several severe engagements, and did honor to the Polish forces in the glorious days of Sobieski.

After General Bonaparte became consul, two Polish legions entered the French service—the Italian legion, commanded by Dombrowski, and the German legion under Kniaziewicz. To the latter is due the principal honor of gaining the victory of Hohenlinden. After the peace of Luneville, both legions, numbering fifteen thousand men, were sent to Italy. The situation of France in relation to Russia, Austria, and Prussia—the powers who had destroyed Poland—being changed by the fate of war against France, and the services of the legions being no longer needed, all the promises which had been made by France to the Polish patriots were either forgotten or could not be fulfilled, and they were obliged to serve in St. Domingo, Spain, and elsewhere, as the mutable profession of arms required. These gallant and unfortunate legions, however, aided in keeping up a nominal national existence for their country long after the Polish state had actually expired. A civil committee, the ghost of the Polish government, continued its sessions either at Paris or Italy, in strict conformity to the minutest rules of the Diet, in order that

the constitutionality of their acts might not be questioned. They were therefore literally a nation without a country, constantly looking forward with great anxiety to the remuneration of their services which France had promised them, or at least encouraged them to hope for, in the re-establishment of the Polish nation and government. So sanguine were the Poles of Napoleon's aid in their restoration, that whenever the thanks of the French nation were voted to these gallant legions, Dombrowski invariably in his answers reminded the French emperor of his engagements towards Poland.

At last their expectations were partially realized in 1807 and 1808, when Napoleon organized the grand duchy of Warsaw, with four millions of inhabitants, containing Polish provinces torn from the grasp of Austria and Prussia, and established under the sovereignty of Frederic Augustus, king of Saxony, as grand-duke. These unfortunate legions, what few survived their hard fought battles, were left to perish in poverty and obscurity, cursing with their last breath the infamy of those who had partitioned and destroyed their beloved country, and the bad faith of France, who had guaranteed its restoration as a reward for their services. It is due to Napoleon and his government to say, that had the emperor been successful in his Russian campaign, he would undoubtedly have humbled the Czar and his government, by restoring Poland at the expense of Russia, the common enemy of Poland and France; but his failure in conquering their worst enemy placed it beyond the power of France to redeem their pledges to unfortunate Poland.*

* Chodzko's History of the Polish Legions in Italy; Paris, 1829, 2 vols. Encyclopedia Americana, X., 216.

CHAPTER VII.

WARS.

General Character of Polish wars—Their Early History—Wars with the surrounding nations—Last Battle at Warsaw—Effects of War in Poland —The Laws of War.

THE territory of ancient Poland possessed nearly the same bounds as that now occupied by the dominion of Russia in Europe. It stretched from the Baltic to the Euxine; from Smolensko to Bohemia; and embraced within its bosom the whole Scythia of antiquity,—the storehouse of nations,—the arsenal of wars,—the nursery of warriors; from whence the savage hordes, descending like mountain torrents from the north, spread themselves over Europe, Asia, and Africa, conquering, burning, and sacking Rome, and the great cities of the East, in their destructive march. These barbarians have been principally celebrated in every age for their heroic valor. Twice, in conjunction with the Tartars, they captured the ancient capital of Russia; and the conflagration of Moscow and the retreat of Napoleon, were but the repetition of similar scenes, which the Polish troops had witnessed five centuries previous on the banks of the Moskwa, where the heroes of Poland fell; while their victorious eagles, soaring on the mountains from peak to peak,

viewed the scenes of carnage in the vales below with patriotic interest.

Placed on the frontiers of European civilization, they for centuries formed the bulwark of Christendom against barbarian invasion; and, single-handed and alone, they withstood the shock of foreign arms, while, at the same time, they were compelled to carry on their most desperate wars with their own subjects,—the Cossacks of the Ukraine,—whose roving habits and predatory life disdained the restraints of aristocratic and monarchical governments. In order to appreciate the terrible battles they maintained with the memorable insurrection of those formidable hordes, under Bogdan, in the seventeenth century, we must transport ourselves to the days of Scythian warfare, and view the features of that dreadful invasion of the Sarmatian tribes, which the genius and valor of Marius averted from the Roman republic.

Nor has the military spirit of the Poles declined in more modern times. The almost miraculous victories of Sobieski, and particularly of Chocim and Vienna, would seem to be more the fiction of romance than the realities of life.* The annals of history nowhere present a victory so glorious as the conquest of Chocim, in all the triumphs of Christendom over the Saracens, since the battles of Richard on the field of Ascalon. Nor should the Christian of the present day forget that the Mohammedan forces would have resistlessly marched over the plains of Germany, even as late as the reign of Louis XIV., if they had not been subdued in the outset by the Polish hero under the walls of Vienna It was a mark of Napoleon's wisdom and foreseeing sagacity, when he said it was the peculiar quality of the Polanders to form soldiers more rapidly than any other people. And well might the great com-

* A full description of these battles is given in the life of Sobieski.

mander pronounce this high eulogium on troops, whose exploits in the Italian and Spanish campaigns every way justified the expectations of the immortal hero. No sabres were more trusty, no blades cut deeper than theirs in the Russian ranks, during the French campaign of 1812; and, when universal defection had well nigh pervaded Napoleon's camp, Polish faith remained inviolate throughout the campaign. And had Napoleon fulfilled his pledges, by restoring Poland to an independent nation, the whole power of the kingdom would have taken the field on the invasion of Russia. Had Poland and France united in the common cause of freedom, under the lead of that mighty genius, before the blaze of whose cannon the whole eastern continent trembled like Belshazzar, the battle of human liberty might have been fought through successfully, and the eastern continent long since might have witnessed the funeral of tyranny, without a monarch left for a pall-bearer.

Their wars, like all other national measures, were fickle and useless, resembling the contests in La Vendée, where, six days after the most glorious victory, the successful army was disbanded, leaving their invincible generals to wander in the swamps and woods, with a few ragged, half-starved followers, penniless, friendless, and houseless. At the celebrated battle of Chocim, Sobieski, one of the greatest generals of his age, commanded an army of forty thousand men,—the best army which Poland had mustered in the field for many centuries; and at their head, the brave general stormed the Turk's intrenchments, which were obstinately defended by eighty thousand veterans and three hundred pieces of cannon; where he routed that overpowering, mighty host, slew fifty thousand warriors, and marched the Polish army triumphantly to the banks of the Danube. But no sooner had the Poles won

this immortal victory and wreathed their brows with all the laurels of war,—while all Europe resounded with the praises of the Polish hero, confidently expecting the deliverance of oppressed Greece from the merciless grasp of the Turk — a thing then easily to be done,—the army was immediately dissolved, the troops returned to their homes, and the invincible Sobieski was barely able to keep the field with a few thousand men. This is only one specimen of Polish mutability.

The Poles, weakened by their equality and tyranny, and superior to their neighbors in number and discipline, were the only warlike people in the world to whom victory never gave peace, conquest, or profit. Their annals are filled with repeated and almost continued contests with the Germans, the Hungarians, the northern pirates, the Cossacks of the Ukraine, and the Osmanlis; but the Polish eagles never perched beyond the frontiers of the republic, and the boundaries of the kingdom remained the same. Poland coolly folded her arms, and saw Moravia, Brandenburg, Pomerania, Bohemia, and Mecklenburg, withdraw from the kingdom, without the least sensation of the necessity of establishing a central government sufficiently strong to unite and protect so many discordant materials. But she was determined to drink the bitter consequences of her foolish, pitiless aristocracy, and senseless equality.* Superadded to all these national evils, Poland was constantly involved in centuries of domestic and foreign wars, sufficient to wreck and ruin any nation, ancient or modern. The physical situation of Poland was unfavorable for protection from foreign invasions. Located on the frontiers of European civilization, far removed from the sea, and all commercial intercourse with other nations, they were compelled to maintain a

* Salvandy, I., 74.

constant and bloody war with the eastern hordes of the Asiatic deserts, who, more than once, threatened to overrun all Europe, at the expense of civilization, literature, and religion. Their history is almost one uninterrupted tragedy of war with the Muscovites, the Tartars, and the Turks, which frequently drove them to such extremities that their escape from utter ruin was almost miraculous These murderous conflicts blighted their rural industry, sapped the foundation of social, moral, and religious society, and educated the nation to those wandering, warlike, and savage habits, which had given place to civilization and moral refinement, centuries before, in all the other European States. Religious frenzy, bigotry, and superstition, which ruptured the Greek and Catholic Church, and caused the revolt of the Cossacks of the Ukraine, finally resulted in the union of their vast territory with the Muscovite dominion.

This extraordinary nation, who had the world for a battle-field —a life of fifteen centuries for their campaign—in whose experience freedom and tyranny were synonymous—whose liberty was licentiousness, and their government only weakness, while their most splendid victories were equally destitute of conquest, peace, and utility, has no parallel in history. They were the common prey of the Germans, the Hungarians, the Muscovites, and the pirates of the north. Without a single sensible effort for establishing a permanent, quiet, orderly government, for the security and union of the vast domains of Poland, Bohemia, Mecklenburg, Moravia, Brandenburg, Pomerania, Silesia, the Ukraine, and Red Russia, successively caught the spirit of improvement from surrounding nations, and separated from their mother, Poland, disgusted with the folly and national degradation of their common parent.

Doomed to destruction by that fatal madness which is always the sure precursor of ruin, without foresight, without progression—despising the advancing steps of more enlightened nations, and blindly attached to their barbarous customs and sanguinary conflicts, they drank the last poisonous dregs of their gaudy, senseless aristocracy, mingled with a savage democracy, crimsoned with foreign and domestic war, turbid and noxious with slavery.*

The history of Poland, from the first origin of the nomadic tribes, even before their emigration to the plains of ancient Sarmatia, to the last battle at Warsaw, on the 25th of February, 1831, is very little more than one continuous narrative of war in all its various and most horrid features. The Poles were early trained in the art of war as a profession, and they made it their principal business not only to fight their own battles, but the battles of the neighboring nations, merely for the asking, and without reward. To a Polish noble war was his amusement—his luxury. With the exception, perhaps, of the reign of Piast, we can scarcely find a score of continuous years, and more generally not half that number, in which the army was permitted to rest from both foreign and domestic war. Down as late as the reign of Piast, in the year 830, the Poles, like all other barbarous nations, were a mass of slaves to their voyvodes, whose only business was war and hunting, their only laws were will and fear, and their only religion a gross idolatry. Ignorant of arts and commerce, their only pursuits were the use of their weapons and athletic sports; without civilization, their only care was for meat, drink, and clothing, and their taste was exercised only in the embellishment of their arms, and the selection of their war horses. In

* Alison, I., 303; Salvandy, I., 125, 129; Rulh. I., 36, 38, 64.

the reign of Bolealas, in 999, the Polish troops were engaged in a war against the Bohemians. At this time they were principally cavalry—at least all who could keep a horse, and the rest served on foot; and this was the principal distinction among the nobility at this day. They were all obliged to serve, and the Comes of the district commanded them. These commanders were also their judges, and called Kastellani or Castellans. The only pay of this army was beauty and booty—their only baggage was their weapons, and, of course, they were a most formidable foe.*

The principal wars in which Poland was involved with foreign states, embraced the conflicts with the Cossacks, Russia, Sweden, the Turks, Tartars, Teutonic knights, Bohemia, and the almost continual wars of two hundred years with the Germans. Their internal wars arose principally from political contests, religious disputes, and the quarrels of the slaves and their masters. The feelings of deadly animosity which existed between Poland and the neighboring nations, originated primarily in the feuds of their ancestors, and particularly between Russia and Poland, amid a continued series of the most cruel quarrels; and battle after battle nourished their mutual hatred until both were resolved on the final destruction of each other. For many centuries the banks of the Bug were the awful battle-ground of the Russians and Poles. In the time of Bolealas the Terrible, the Russians were defeated there with great slaughter, and the river was so stained with human blood, that it has ever since been known in history by the name of the *Horrid*. The whole road from the banks of the Bug to Warsaw, has been a battle-field, over which the Poles chased the Russians to the frontier, and the Russians, in

* Fletcher, 16—21.

their turn, drove them back to Warsaw, until every inch of the way was drenched with the mingled blood of the slaughtered Poles, Russians, and Prussians, while the houses and villages of the former were sacked and burned.

But the greatest, the last, and hardest fought battle in which the Poles and Russians ever engaged, and perhaps the greatest in Europe, except that of Waterloo, was fought on the twenty-fifth of February, 1831, and may be regarded as a fair specimen of Polish valor. The Russian army, under the command of Diebitsch, consisted of one hundred and forty-two thousand infantry, forty thousand cavalry, and three hundred and twelve pieces of cannon. This overpowering force was divided into three grand divisions, forming two lines of combatants, and a third for a reserve. The left wing, between Wavre and the marshes of the Vistula, embraced four divisions of infantry of forty-seven thousand men, three of cavalry of ten thousand five hundred, and one hundred and eight pieces of cannon. The right wing consisted of three and a half divisions of infantry of thirty-one thousand men, four divisions of cavalry of fifteen thousand seven hundred and fifty men, and fifty-two pieces of cannon. Upon the borders of the extensive forest opposite the Forest of Elders, was placed the reserve under the command of the grand duke Constantine. The brave Poles had less than fifty thousand men, and a hundred pieces of cannon, under the command of General Skrzynecki, to battle with these swarms of Russian hordes.*

At the earliest dawn of day—that awful day which sealed the fate of Poland—the whole force of the Russian right wing, with a most terrible and destructive fire of fifty pieces of artillery and

* Stephens, II., 201.

columns of infantry, charged the left wing of the Polish army, with the determination and expectation of crushing it by a single manœuvre of their overpowering numbers. The undaunted Poles received them with firmness, and returned a well-directed death-fire with six thousand five hundred men, and twelve pieces of artillery, without surrendering a foot of ground, sensible that the battle was a question, "*To be or not to be*," in the history of Poland; and after a severe battle of several hours, the Russians were compelled to slacken their fire. About ten o'clock the plain was suddenly covered with the whole swarm of the Russian forces issuing from the cover of the dense forest, presenting almost one solid mass of advancing troops. Soon the earth began to tremble with the continued roar of two hundred pieces of cannon posted on a single line, which continually blazed with a fire more terrible than the thunders of Marengo, Austerlitz, or Waterloo. The Russians now made an attack on the right wing, but with no better success than their previous charge on the left. At length Diebitsch brought the whole force of his army against the Forest of Elders, for the purpose of dividing the Poles into two parts. The bloody scene now became too awful for human vision or contemplation. One hundred and twenty pieces of cannon were brought to bear on this single point, while fifty battalions rushed forward to the attack, and, all together, kept up a scene of massacre unknown to the history of war, until the streams which intersected the forest were so dammed and bridged with the dead, that the infantry marched over on their corpses. The brave Poles, in the midst of all this carnage and death, with only twelve battalions, for four hours defended the forest against this fiendish attack, until they were driven out nine times; and nine times, by a series of

admirably executed manœuvres, the Russians were repulsed with great loss. Not satisfied with all this human butchery, in a battle between might and right, the batteries were in a moment hurried to another point, and the artillery rushed to the charge like cavalry, sometimes within a hundred feet of the enemy's columns, and there discharged their murderous fire of grape.

Thus the deadly combatants fought and fell until three o'clock, when the Polish generals, many of whom, severely wounded, fought on foot at the head of their divisions after their horses had been shot under them, finally resolved upon a retrograde manœuvre, for the purpose of drawing the Russians into the open field. Diebitsch, supposing it to be a retreat, turned his eye to the city, and exclaimed, "Well, then, it appears that, after this bloody day, I shall take tea in the Belvidere palace." At this moment, the Russian troops debouched from the forest, and a cloud of Russian cavalry, with several regiments of heavy cuirassiers at their head, advanced to the attack. The brave Colonel Pientha, who had sustained an unremitting fire from his effective battery for five hours, seated with perfect coolness upon a broken piece of cannon, gave his last destructive fire, then galloped away under the terrible discharge of the enemy's artillery. The Russian forces, animated by this rapid movement of his battery, advanced with the cavalry on a trot upon the line of a battery of rockets, while a destructive discharge was poured into their ranks, and the horses, enraged by the flakes of fire, became ungovernable, and dashed away from the ranks in disorder, exposed to the galling fire of the Polish infantry; and in a few minutes were so completely destroyed, that of a regiment of cuirassiers whose helmets were inscribed with the motto of "Invincibles," not a man escaped. The destruction of the

routed cavalry, and the flight of the columns of infantry under the pursuit of the lancers, caused a general retreat; and the cry "Poland for ever," reverberated through the heavens, until it reached the ancient walls of Warsaw, to the great joy of its anxious inhabitants.*

So terrible was the carnage of that memorable day, that the Polish army had not a single general or staff-officer, who had not his horse killed or wounded under him; two thirds of the officers and soldiers had their clothes pierced with balls, and more than a tenth part of the army were wounded. The field of battle was covered with thirty thousand Russians and ten thousand Poles, who lay rank upon rank, quietly slumbering side by side, in the cold embrace of death, unmindful of their former hatred, and regardless of previous rank and fortune. The Forest of Elders was so strewed with human corpses, that its cognomen was from that day changed from the "Forest of Elders" to the "Forest of the Dead." The disastrous results of this fatal battle spread terror and dismay through Russia; and all Europe heard with astonishment, that the far-famed crosser of the Balkan had been defeated under the walls of Warsaw, by a modern Spartan band of Polish heroes, hardly sufficient in number for a body-guard of an Eastern prince.

During this day of death, every heart in the city and vicinity of Warsaw trembled with alternate hopes and fears for the fate of their friends and dear ones, who were falling in the battle, and with fearful forebodings for the lives of the innocent and helpless at home. Every house-top was covered, every window filled, and every eminence or stand which commanded a view of the combatants, was occupied with aged fathers and mothers, beloved

* Stephens, II., 203.

sisters, wives, and children, who mingled their feelings in common anxiety, united their tears in one common grief, joined their prayers in one common devotion for the Polish heroes who were every moment falling in the defence of their country, and those beloved ones they had left at home. Thousands of anxious citizens of both sexes and all ages were assembled, with trembling interest eagerly watching the progress of the battle, as they viewed through the occasional divisions of the columns of smoke the alternate success of the Russians and Poles.

But the most distressing scene in this dreadful tragedy was experienced when the remnant of the gallant Polish army returned from the battle to their friends in Warsaw. Their hair and faces begrimed with powder and blood, gave them more the appearance of fiends than human beings; the living and dying, with their shattered spears and broken armor, made the heavens ring with their patriotic songs, encored by their wives, infants, and friends, as they "crossed the bridge, and filed slowly through the streets, with their lances shivered against the cuirasses of the guards, their helmets broken, their forms black and spotted with blood, some erect, some tottering, and some barely able to sustain themselves in the saddle, while above the stern chorus of patriotic songs rose the distracted cries of mothers, wives, daughters, and lovers, seeking among this broken band for forms dearer than life, many of whom were then sleeping on the battle-field."*

The ravages of war in all their worst forms, are clearly depicted in everything that relates to Poland—in her history, her progression, sovereignty, slavery, aristocracy, representative assemblies, army, society, literature, lands, government, laws, wealth, religion, politics, civilization, and final conquest. The

* Stephens, II., 204.

statesman who would learn the philosophy of aggressive war, need only to study the history and institutions of Poland. There we may learn the sad consequences of war on the individual and national wealth of a people—its destructive influence on society —its blighting effects on the domestic relations—its ruinous consequences on the character of the combatants, their wives, children, home, and institutions.

That war may be justifiable under certain circumstances, and is one of the laws of Heaven, by which the worst temporal punishments are inflicted on the rebellious race, is conceded; but it must in all cases be confined to such defensive wars as are just and necessary for self-defence and the protection of national rights and honor.*

* Alison, IV., 14.

The battles fought by Sobieski and Kosciusko are described in their lives contained in the chapter on great men.

CHAPTER VIII.

ARISTOCRACY.

General Principles of Aristocracy—Its Definition—Its Divisions—History of Aristocracy—Nobility of Europe generally—Polish Aristocracy—Origin of the Polish Nobility—First Assemblies of the Nobles—Their Power and Influence on Society.

ARISTOCRACY, according to its etymology, means a government of the *best*, or *most excellent;* and is derived from the Greek *aristoi*. This term, originally in Greek, as well as *optimates* in Latin, was used to denote the educated and wealthy class in the state. In a more general sense, the term includes those persons who are distinguished from the masses by their rank, power, and influence. In a more limited sense, it is that form of government which places the supreme power in the nobles.

The general features of aristocratic power comprehend literary aristocracy, moral aristocracy, political aristocracy, the aristocracy of wealth, and the distinctions of caste and blood. The two former may, and frequently are, not only harmless, but highly useful, while the last three are more liable to abuse; and when perverted, generally are attended with disastrous consequences to the best interests of individuals and society.

The original meaning of the term aristocracy, expressive of the wealthy and educated class of citizens, has, long since, and

even at a very early day, lost its moral definition, and retained its political sense; and hence it is, that the term generally, since the fifth century, means merely a government of a *few*. In all governments, where the sovereign power does not belong to one person, it is possessed and administered by a number of persons, either greater or less than half the community. And, as a general rule, if their number be less than half, the government is styled an *aristocracy;* if it be greater than half, the government is called a democracy. This estimate of numbers generally excludes infants, females, and slaves. An *aristocracy*, therefore, is that form of government, in which the sovereign power is shared among a number of persons, less than half the adult males in the entire community, where there is not a class of mere subjects or slaves; or the dominant community, where there is a class of subjects or slaves.*

In some governments, the word aristocracy is used to signify, not merely the form of government, but a particular class of persons in the state. When used in this sense, it is applied, not merely to the persons composing the sovereign body of an aristocratic government, but to a class or political party in any state, whatever be the form of its government. As in England, where there is a privileged order of persons, having a title or civil dignity, and where no person, not belonging to this body, is admitted to share in the sovereign power—this class is called the aristocracy; and all persons, not belonging to it, are called the popular party, or the people.

Under such circumstances, many of the rich citizens would not be included in the aristocratic class; but, if the constitution of the state be changed, so as to remove the disability of the

* Penny Cyclopædia, II., 327.

people, and the rich obtain a large share of the sovereign power, then the wealthy become the aristocratic class, in contrast with the poor and middle ranks of society. This principle is found in the history of Florence, where the *nobili popolani*, or popular nobles, at one period, were opposed to the aristocratic party, until a change in the constitution made them the chiefs of the aristocracy, and the enemies of the people.

Aristocracy in England, as the name of a class, at the present time, is generally applied to the rich, as opposed to the rest of the community; sometimes, however, it is used in a narrower sense, and is restricted to the nobility or members of the peerage. When we use the word *aristocracy* in this last sense, it may be applied to an order of persons in states of any form of government, where a titled and privileged nobility exists. The privileged orders in France, from the reign of Louis XIV. to the Revolution of 1789, have frequently been called the aristocracy; although the government was, during that period, purely monarchical. And on the same principle, a class of persons has, by many historians, been termed the aristocracy in aristocratical republics, as in Venice and Rome, before the admission of the plebeians to equal political rights; and in democratical republics—as Athens, Rome in later times, and France during a part of her revolution. In this sense, the nobility of Poland were the exclusive aristocracy of the nation, to which no citizen could be elevated, nor could nobility be lost by poverty, crime, or any other cause.

The term *aristocracy* is never used by the Greek authors, where it originated, to signify a *class of persons*, nor is it found in Machiavelli and the revivers of political science, after the middle ages; although among modern writers throughout all Europe,

this meaning universally prevails. In the Republic of North America no privileged class or titled nobility exists, and no privileged aristocracy is found.

It seems to be a general principle in the human constitution, that power is corrupting; and cannot be long and successfully used by the same person, without injury and abuse. And this has undoubtedly given rise to the popular doctrine in republican governments, of rotation in office. Political aristocracy, the power of wealth, and the distinctions of caste, are more generally obnoxious to the charge of corruption, than literary and moral influence. And yet all these several kinds of power, when duly appreciated and wisely used, may be highly useful. No matter how much literary, moral, or political power a man may possess, nor how extensive his opulence, so long as he uses these talents wisely, honestly, and usefully. The great danger lies, not in their possession, but in their abuse.

Land is an invariable characteristic of aristocracy, and the basis of the institution. The monster always clings to the soil that supports it. For it must be remembered, that it is not by chartered privileges alone, nor by birth, but by landed property, handed down from generation to generation, that an aristocratic nobility is constituted and sustained. A nation may exist, at times, in the extremes of immense fortunes and great poverty; and unless those fortunes are territorial, there is no aristocracy, but simply the two classes of the rich and the poor, who are constantly changing fortunes by industry, frugality, and virtue, where the soil is free and the government pure. Aristocrats seldom flourish in a free soil, nor in a country of democratic institutions.

The history of aristocracy, as identified with nobility, in its

general character, is a record of crime and moral degradation, unworthy of the true dignity of the human race. And even if we concede to the superannuated institution, that it has done some good in the course of its long history of more than five thousand years—which is all its honest friends pretend to claim—still, the countless evils, the never ending miseries, which it has produced in Poland—to say nothing of the many millions of precious lives and valuable treasures it has cost France and other nations—infinitely surpass all its boasted claims of political and moral excellence. The political importance of a hereditary nobility, or a class of society which claims the first civil honors and privileges above the rest of the citizens, however competent and worthy, by no other right or title but that of birth, is a startling proposition in the ears of wisdom and freedom; and yet, strange as it may seem, it has generally prevailed, more or less, in all nations and ages, except America. The general character of the institution—which is shaded with every variety of crime and human degradation—its origin, which has no other claims to existence than the triumph of might over right, its history, every page of which is a record of crime in support of its unhallowed tenure, the variety of its chameleon forms, and its useless, oppressive, and unjust relations to other classes of society, would seem to be sufficient data, on which a sound judgment of condemnation and execution might be safely and justly founded, without even a hazard of candid criticism.

It is in vain that nobility claims to be the patron of science, for the history of the world shows very clearly, that the most distinguished scholars have sprung from obscurity, and cut their own way to eminence, through poverty and great tribulation, like Franklin, with his roll of bread under his arm, without the aid

of a cold-hearted, jealous aristocracy; and not unfrequently encountering their opposition. True, we may, in the history of almost every nation, discover a period in which the nobility have kindly regarded the great interests of mankind; knowledge and virtue, or love of moral beauty, and the charms of nature and art; but the misfortune is, that the same class, not unfrequently under the dictation of caprice, fashion, or interest, perhaps in the same quarter of a century, wantonly demolished all these beautiful fabrics and flourishing institutions

The history of monarchies, both ancient and modern, shows most clearly that the greatest obstacles in the way of peace, good order, and justice, and the great majority of all the wars, civil and foreign, which have deluged the world, have originated in the secret council chambers of the nobility—impatient of the salutary restraints of liberty which the good of society requires—although they were very willing to flatter superior power, so long as they were allowed to participate in its favors. This state of things always existed in Poland, under the patronage of her ruthless nobility. Revolutions, riots, and revolts, with a very few exceptions, almost always originated with a discontented, ambitious, crown-seeking nobility; and where one prince has lost his throne and life by popular insurrections, hundreds of others may be mentioned who have been deprived of both by the conspiracies, factions, and midnight assassinations of the nobility.

Nor is it among the least of these aristocratic evils that the progression of extensive states, with authority over numerous dependents and slaves, with generally the power of life and death, gives to the nobles a power which embarrasses the course of those monarchs who desire to protect and elevate the lower classes. Where these insurmountable difficulties exist, as they

always did in Poland, the result of such a strife frequently is, that the *monarchical* becomes in fact an *aristocratical* government; and then follows the almost invariable sequel of a sovereign senate, composed of the noble families. Of all the governments which have prevailed in the world, an aristocracy is decidedly the worst. It not only disregards the natural rights, liberty, and equality of the people, but is the most oppressive, unjust, and ruinous of all governments. The history of aristocracy is uniform in its instructions, that the same usurpation, tyranny, and oppression at different times, have characterized the nobility of Asia, Africa, Rome, Venice, Sweden, Poland, and other European states.

Nor can the plea of necessity be successfully urged in support of the institution. So long as the Creator decrees that all men by nature are free and equal; and so long as reason requires us to value every man according to his moral excellence, and justice demands that the state should secure equal rights and privileges to all the citizens without discrimination, protect their rights by equal laws, and prevent the few from subjecting the many, it will be in vain that aristocracy urges its unjust claims on the ground of political necessity, in violation of the common dictates of reason and humanity. It is an old maxim of wisdom, of great antiquity, "That whatever is worth doing at all, is worth doing well." The *just* way is the *right* way; and the *right* way is the true *political* way of conducting the affairs of government. And all the time-serving, selfish arguments of a superannuated, illegitimate aristocracy, to say the least of it, have no weight against the principles of eternal justice and wisdom. We are aware of the old stereotyped arguments which have been so frequently put forth for more than fifty centuries, by all the herculean talent, learning, logic, and eloquence that nobility could command, in

support of its unnatural, useless, and worse than useless existence. Their argument is, that conceding all these "dogmas and truisms, which no one denies," as they please to call them, "still they do not prove the inconsistency of a hereditary nobility with the best constitution which the circumstances of a particular state will allow; because time may have interwoven many valuable interests with it, and made them dependent upon it. And in a state where the ideas of justice and citizenship are clearly understood and well rooted, a privileged order is necessary, only under *very peculiar circumstances;* and as a necessary safeguard and protection between royalty and the common people." And, again, the argument is—"Human folly may render it necessary to admit a hereditary monarchy, as a necessary evil, to prevent still greater evils, as all human affairs are a choice of evils. Thus it has become so much interwoven with all the interests of the several states, that its abolition would be a very difficult task." To all this sophistry, the American government, Norway, and other states who have tried the experiment, furnish a triumphant answer; and until aristocratic governments sustain their visionary arguments by facts—and facts, too, drawn from experience in the absence of a nobility—their idle gossip in favor of sacrificing right to might, justice to injustice, truth to falsehood, liberty to slavery, and wisdom to folly, will have very little weight in the scales of conscience and reason.*

Norway came to the same conclusion in 1821; and after trying aristocracy in all its various forms, sinuosities, genuflexions, and chameleon changes, summoned the moral courage to abolish the whole system, by three stern and well-directed blows, heedless of the remonstrances of royalty, and the threats, flatteries, and tears of

* American Encyclopædia, IX., 301.

an expiring aristocracy, without the slightest inconvenience, and to the great joy and prosperity of the people.

In reviewing this institution, historically, we find a hereditary nobility in the infancy of almost every nation, ancient and modern, except the American Union. It enjoyed a flourishing existence long anterior to the first authentic records of profane history, and the monster now points to its grey locks and mysterious antiquity, as the credentials of its heavenly origin. Its rise may be attributed to various causes. Military despotism was the primeval parent of this offspring; while in some instances, at subsequent periods, the blood of the noble race was improved by the honors paid to superior talent, and the society of the priests, who were revered as the guardians of the great mysteries of religion. It is a remarkable fact in the history of mankind—and whether for weal or woe we shall not now stop to inquire—that military chieftains have always overawed the community, and commanded the superior reverence of their country. To this superiority the priestly nobility of the remotest antiquity has uniformly yielded; though at times with no little trepidation and jealousy. Even the old caste of the Brahmins in India has surrendered its power to the rank of the Ketri; while the rulers on the islands of the Indian Archipelago are still obliged to pay the greatest deference to the descendants of the elder nobility, over whom they exercise unlimited power.

Among the ancient German tribes, which seem to be the common nursery of European aristocracy, only obscure traces of hereditary nobility are found; which, in subsequent periods, was generally established throughout that continent. Many of these nations recognise one ruling family as the ancestors of their nobility. Among the Saxons, Danes, and Normans, the family

of Odin prevailed; the Visigoths revered the house of Balth; while the Ostrogoths sustained the race of Amal, and the Bavarians that of Agilolfing. These families seem to have sustained the same relations to their nations, as the Incas to the Peruvians, and other royal families of the American Indians. The Asen, who were the early progenitors of European aristocracy, were supposed to be of Divine origin by the ignorant and superstitious masses; and so much excelled the common people, from whom they derived such superior benefits, that the fabulous divinity of the ancestors was most cheerfully attributed to their descendants; who, on this account, were honored for many ages as the privileged nobility, and legitimate aristocracy of the people. Besides these divine and fabulous aristocrats, no other hereditary nobility existed among the Franks, Saxons, Normans, Danes, Swedes, Poles, and most of the other nations of the north, for a long period of antiquity.

The Antrustiones and Lendes, or Liti, of the Franks; the Degenes—including the Thaini, Thani, Thegnas, etc.—of the Saxons; the Hirdmans and Dingmans of the Danes and Normans, are not considered noblemen, in the modern sense of the word; but only the successors of the princely companions described by Tacitus, who have gradually usurped a hereditary rank, by subsequent acquisitions of feudal property. The dignities of the Frank counts, the alderman and great *thanes* of England, as also of the *jarls* of Denmark—known in England as the Eorlas, were accessible to every one of distinguished merit, and favored by fortune.

Both in Germany and France, the first hereditary nobility commenced with the fall of the Carlovingian dynasty. In England, it first became hereditary with the conquest of the Normans, in the tenth and eleventh centuries; and was afterwards spread over all

Europe; and dignities as well as lands became hereditary. The nobles of the first rank, under different forms, including princes, counts, and lords, together with the warriors, consisting of the knights bound to service in war and at court, and not always considered as perfectly free, were distinguished from the peasants and common citizens who were obligated to perform the common and laborious services. The latter class, however, are not always to be considered as slaves, in the general acceptation of the term. The subsequent history and progress of these civil distinctions, with their numerous relations to the people, varied in the different countries of Europe. In England, Scotland, Spain, and in some parts of Italy, the title of lords and barons, which belonged to the higher nobility, descended only to the oldest son. The younger sons, in case of preferment in civil life, whose rank in England is established by law, are considered generally as ranking with the common people. They usually engage in various kinds of commercial business, devote themselves to the clerical profession, to military service, and the practice of law; while some become merchants, proprietors of manufactures, etc.

In England, hereditary nobility, comprehending various classes of titles, such as dukes, marquises, earls, viscounts, and barons, is more personal. There are also several feudal tenures, which are merely titular, to which certain privileges and honors are attached, which every land proprietor enjoys freely; but they are not ranked with the nobility, unless they are elevated to the distinction by a special patent from the government. In Spain and Italy the same rank corresponds to the *titulados*, including the princes, dukes, marquises, and counts; and depends principally upon property. These titles of nobility, though sometimes conferred by the monarchs, are mostly connected with estates,

and frequently attached to very small fiefs; and hence arise the multitudes of counts in Upper Italy—the *conti di terra firma* of Venice in former times. In this manner many of the distinguished Spanish families acquire a great number of such titles, which seems to be the acme of their ambition. The badges of these aristocratic honors are called garras, or caps, and sometimes amount to four or five hundred.

In France this rank is common to all the members of the noble family. Previous to the revolution, the rights of the peerage and the feudal estates descended only to the eldest son, and the younger sons were left to seek their fortunes either in the army or church; while every inferior employment, even mercantile pursuits, forfeited all claims to nobility. The sovereignty of the French princes, which was connected with their ancient fiefs—embracing the dukedoms of Normandy, Bretagne, Guienne, Burgundy; and also the counties of Toulouse, Champagne, and Flanders, with the territories of Dauphiny, Provence, Franche-Compté, Venaissin, etc.—dates its origin at a very early period, and had already reached maturity when Hugh Capet ascended the throne. France wisely united gradually, but as fast as possible, all these extensive fiefs with the crown, until only a few small sovereignties—as the princedoms of Bouillon, Dombes, Orange, Avignon, and Venaissin—remained in more modern times. In the time of Louis IX. appeals from the courts of the barons to the supreme courts of the kings and parliaments were established, and were followed by a gradual and permanent extension of the king's authority over the lands of the barons; and in the reign of Louis XIII. the power of the aristocratic grandees was abolished by Richelieu. In France the kings have always been eager to undermine the nobility, and reduce them to a level with

the common people. Louis XI. and Louis XIV. were the most active levellers, and reduced every rank beneath the throne to the same subjection; while Louis XV. descended, with all his court, almost to the dust, for the purpose, as it would seem, of teaching the nobility lessons of humility and subjection.*

In France, the history of the royal family affords no example of marriage with persons of a lower rank, though the law did not prohibit such connections. The legitimate branches of the royal family, the offspring of mistresses, the princes of Vendome, Verneuil, Vermandois, Maine, Toulouse, and Penthievre, which are now extinct, Louis XIV. freely recognized in his will as capable of inheriting the French throne, notwithstanding they descended from parents of unequal rank, and from illegitimate associations. The same right could never have been contested in relation to legitimate children of parents unequal in rank. In the noble families of France, the rank of the mother was of no consequence; the title, rank, property, and all the aristocratic and royal importance of the family, depended on the lineage of the father.

The nobility in France is known by the title, *pairs de France;* for both the ancient and modern titles of nobility, as *prince*, *duc*, *marquis*, *count*, *vicomte*, and *baron*, exist there without peerage. The lower title of nobility, holding the same rank as the gentry of England and the hidalgo of Spain, was connected with very insignificant offices, and of course much more easily obtained than in England.

The French revolution, if no other good resulted from it, is entitled to the immortal honor of first depriving the nobles of their oppressive privileges and exclusive rights, as that of the

* American Encyclopædia, IX., 302.

jurisdiction, etc., by the decree of August 4th, 1789; and after the overthrow of the feudal system by a number of successive laws, the decree of June 19th, 1790, abolished entirely all hereditary ranks. It is to be regretted that, after these several steps of reform, the senate under Napoleon—August 4th, 1806, and the decree of March 1st, 1808—introduced in France a new hereditary nobility, with the titles of princes, dukes, counts, barons, and chevaliers, which were fortunately limited in their descent to the eldest son. After the restoration of the Bourbons, the ancient nobility reclaimed their former rights and privileges, and thus nobility again was generally introduced into all the states of Europe, except Norway. Previous to the revolution the number of noble families in France did not exceed seventeen thousand five hundred; and reckoning five individuals to a family, there might have been at most ninety thousand nobles; but the disasters of the revolution probably reduced them to less than forty thousand.

In England the nobility have never inherited the crown, nor enjoyed sovereignty, except in some provinces, which formerly were the domains of princes who were nearly related to the royal family,—as Lancaster, Cornwallis, and a few viscounties,—including Durham, Chester, the Isle of Ely, and particularly the Isle of Man, belonging to the Duke of Athol; all of which exercised, as *counties palatine*, subordinate rights of government. In England, as well as in France, the highest nobility frequently intermarry with the families of respectable citizens, such as merchants, bankers, brewers, advocates, etc. The wife of the celebrated Whitbread, speaker in parliament, and a citizen and brewer of London, was a sister of Earl Grey. The first wife of King James II. was the daughter of Lord Chancellor Hyde, who

afterwards became Earl of Clarendon; and her daughters, Mary and Anne, ascended the throne of England. Similar examples are found in other States

The English nobility composing the House of Lords, consist of five different ranks, namely: dukes, marquises, earls, viscounts, and barons. The lower nobility in England, known as the gentry, is of much later origin, and considered as a separate rank. Throughout England every one ranks in this lower class of nobility whose employment is respectable, and is distinguished by the appellation of esquire, and a coat of arms. Very great importance was attached to the ancient nobility, comprehending such nobility as could not be traced to its origin. A presentation at court required a nobility of four hundred years' duration.

The aristocracy of England has been little more than a nominal institution since the tenth century; and since the fall of James II. it has hardly retained even its nominal existence. A strong hereditary aristocracy has existed in Britain ever since the fifth century; but it was, of all hereditary aristocracies, the least powerful, the least insolent and exclusive, and almost destitute of the odious and invidious characteristics of caste. It was constantly receiving numbers from the people, and constantly sending down numbers to mingle with the people. Any gentleman might become a peer. The younger son of a peer was but a gentleman. Grandsons of peers yielded precedence to newly-made knights. The dignity of knighthood was not beyond the reach of any man who could, by diligence and thrift, realize a good estate, or who could attract notice by his valor in a battle or a siege. It was regarded as no disparagement for the daughter of a duke—nay, of a royal duke—to espouse a distinguished commoner. Thus, Sir John Howard married the daughter of

Thomas Mowbray, duke of Norfolk. Sir Richard Pole married the countess of Salisbury, daughter of George, duke of Clarence. Good blood was indeed held in high respect; but, between good blood and the privileges of peerage there was, most fortunately for England, no necessary connection. Pedigrees as long, and escutcheons as old, were to be found out of the House of Lords as in it. There were new men who bore the highest titles. There were untitled men, well known to be descended from knights who had broken the Saxon ranks at Hastings, and scaled the walls of Jerusalem. There were Bohuns, Mowbrays, DeVeres, —nay, kinsmen of the House of Plantagenet—with no higher addition than that of esquire, and with no civil privileges beyond those enjoyed by every farmer and shopkeeper. There was, therefore, here no line like that which, in some other countries, divided the patrician from the plebeian. The yeoman was not inclined to murmur at dignities to which his own children might rise. The grandee was not inclined to insult a class into which his own children must descend.*

After the wars of York and Lancaster, the several ties which united the nobility with the commonalty, became closer, more numerous, and stronger than ever. The old aristocracy of England had been laid in ruins, far and wide. In the year 1451, Henry the Sixth summoned fifty-three temporal lords to parliament. But the temporal lords summoned by Henry the Seventh to the parliament of 1485, were limited to only twenty-nine, several of whom had recently been elevated to the peerage. And even as late as the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the ranks of the nobility were largely recruited from the society of the gentry. The constitution of England was constructed for the

* Macaulay, Hist., I., 11, 12.

intermixture of the social classes. The knight of the shire was the connecting link between the baron and the shopkeeper. On the same benches on which sat the goldsmiths, drapers, and grocers, who had been returned to parliament by the commercial towns, sat also members who, in any other country, would have been called noblemen, hereditary lords of manors, entitled to hold courts and to wear coat armor, and able to trace back an honorable descent through many generations. Some of them were younger sons and brothers of great lords. Others could boast even of royal blood. At length, the eldest son of an earl of Bedford, called in courtesy by the second title of his father, offered himself as candidate for a seat in the House of Commons, and his example was followed by others. Seated in that house, the heirs of the grandees of the realm naturally became as zealous for its privileges as any of the humble burgesses with whom they were mingled. Thus, English democracy was, from an early period, the most aristocratic, and their aristocracy the most democratic, in the world; a peculiarity which has lasted down to the present day, and which has produced many important moral and political effects.*

The German nobility pursued a different course from France or England. Here, the ancient dukes of Saxony, Bavaria, Franconia, Suabia, Lotharingia, and, next in rank to them, the margraves in the east and north of the German empire, obtained the rights of sovereignty at the same time as in France; and the title of count finally became partly hereditary, and partly an appendage to the ecclesiastical establishments. Although the emperors ultimately succeeded in abolishing these ancient principalities, they derived very little benefit from their victories, for

* Macaulay, Hist., I., 11, 12.

the reason that new sovereignties soon succeeded to the ancient dukedoms, inferior in size and power, but every way equal to the former in the nature and extent of their rights and privileges. The majority of the German counts soon assumed the rights of sovereignty, and a great number of ruling families thus sprang up in the empire, and formed a ruling order of nobility, whose families inherited in common the rank and property of these aristocratic castes.

The German States have one feature peculiar to their nobility, which no other nation in Europe ever adopted, namely, that the mother must be of equal rank with the father, in order for children to succeed to all the aristocratic rights of the sire. Baden, Anhalt, and other princely families, disregarded this principle of inheritance, while others adhered to it with great strictness. The same rule has been extended to the lower class of the German nobility. In the latter case, however, it is restricted to the enjoyment of certain privileges common to the whole body of nobility,—privileges which distinguish the German nobility from the middle classes of freemen, more clearly than in any other country of Europe. This principle is not recognized by even the highest class of nobility in any other European nation.

In Germany alone, the aristocratic interests of the princely families, as well as the exclusive claims of the nobility to the chapters and prebends of the ecclesiastical orders, have given rise to those rigid, exclusive principles, which control their domestic relations.

Germany is also the only nation where a select nobility composed of reigning families and princes, who, in addition to the right of sovereignty over their own territories, shared in the government of the empire by their seat and vote in the Diet; or,

at least, had a share in the collective vote of the prelates, or of the four bodies of counts. Some rights of sovereignty belonged also to the knights of the empire, who did not belong to the select nobility. The precise limits of this select nobility were always involved in doubts and contests; although these rights required judicial repose, on account of the restrictions on marriage. The rank of the select or aristocratic nobility was partly personal and partially hereditary. The former distinction was attached to the ecclesiastical princes, bishops, and abbots, many of whom were, at the same time, actual sovereigns; while others possessed only the dignity of princes of the empire, without the rights of sovereignty.

In most of these ecclesiastical principalities, the German nobility excluded untitled men of learning and talent, against the decree of the Pope, as promulgated in the treaty of Westphalia. The highest degree of hereditary nobility was confined to the families of the princes and counts of the empire, and limited to Germany. Although many French, Italian, Spanish, and English families enjoyed the title of princes, dukes, and marquises,—and English dukes and marquises are also called princes, in official documents,—yet the haughty German princes never considered them as their equals. This class of nobility contains, in France, those six foreign families, which enjoyed at French courts the rights of *princes étrangers*, on account of their relationship to sovereign houses; or on account of their descent from former sovereigns of Bretagne and Aquitaine. These French families consisted of Lotharingia, Savoy, Grimaldi, princes of Monaco, Rohan, Latour, d'Auvergne, dukes and princes of Bouillon. But no such select nobility ever existed in Sweden, Denmark, or Poland; though

some few Polish families made the attempt, without much success, as the Radzivills, Czartoryskis, and others.

Though many German families of this caste have lost their sovereignty, yet the act of the German confederation has secured to them the highest rank of nobility, equal to that of the sovereign houses. Notwithstanding all this, there still remained a recognised distinction in Germany, between the ancient princes who had risen to this dignified title before 1580, and those of a more recent date. The more the power of the Geman princes increased, the more the ascendency of the nobility decreased. These circumstances gave rise to a society, formed in 1815, called the chain of nobility, for the sole purpose of restoring and advancing the interests of the aristocracy; but fortunately for German democracy, it met with little success. The several degrees of the lower nobility in Germany, were—1. the title of Von; 2. Edler Von; 3. Ritter; 4. Bannerherr; 5. Freyherr; 6. Count. The privileges of these different ranks were originally of little importance; until at length, in several countries, they were enlarged to a considerable extent by law, as well as by custom and practice. They enjoyed immunity from taxes, and monopolized all right to the highest public offices, especially in the army.*

Nobility in Norway was abolished by the *Storthing*, by three successive decrees of 1815, 1818, and 1821. The king and nobility rallied all the opposition, and interposed all the obstacles in their power, in vain; while the democracy of the people perseveringly, justly, and discreetly, cut down the superannuated, useless aristocracy of the country. As a last resort, the king and the nobility proposed to the people, the establishment of a new,

* American Encyclopædia, IX., 304.

hereditary nobility, which should be conferred by the king on persons who had benefited their country by eminent services, which titles should descend to the eldest son, in conformity with the aristocracy of Europe generally. But the determined *Storthing*, true to their democracy as the needle to the pole, spurned and rejected the bribe, not only because it was in violation of the twenty-fifth article of the constitution of 1814, which declares that no hereditary privileges, personal or real, can be conferred on any native of Norway, but also because it was a gross invasion of human rights, and, in fact, no benefit to the privileged few.

The Russian nobility, though its origin is not so directly derived from the early German tribes, as from the Poles and their ancestry, has assumed to itself all the German degrees and titles. In Livonia and Esthonia, the ancient nobility, founded on conquest, still exists. The dominion of the Russian nobility over their peasants, gives this aristocratic rank a political importance, though it is destitute of all sovereign rights. In Russia, the rights and privileges of the nobles were not defined before the time of Alexander, and their legal existence has the same date. The legislative enactments, in the central provinces, receive very little attention from the general government, in consequence of the nullity or venality of the subordinate tribunals, which suffer a thousand acts of oppression to be committed, which are never heard of in the capital; and from a criminal indulgence extended to those who are both law-makers and law-breakers. These defects in the body politic are the causes of many vices among the nobility. The Russian nobility has had the double misfortune of living for a long time under the most despotic tyranny, and of possessing at the same time an arbitrary power. Many

of the noble families live the greater part of the year on their estates, or in the neighborhood of their serfs. Their children rarely receive a liberal education, and the universities are not well patronized. The great majority of the young nobles enter into the military service, and remain satisfied with the morose and superficial attainments usual to their profession; and do not compare with the nobility of modern Europe generally, nor did they ever excel the Polish nobility.*

In Spain, any one assumes the name of *hidalgo*, whose ancestors have not been engaged in mean employments, the same as in England.

Nobility at a very early day in its history was conferred by patent, in the nature of a perpetual estate of inheritance. Soon after the nobles had assumed the character of a distinct rank in the state, the sovereigns availed themselves of their right of conferring degrees of nobility on their friends, as a protection to the political interests of the crown, against the invasions of the old nobility, who not unfrequently found themselves in conflict with their monarchs. Philip III. first set the example as early as 1270, to grant charters of nobility in France, and Germany soon followed the precedent.

The most important privileges of nobility have, in modern times, either been restricted within very narrow limits, or abolished; because they were opposed to all the best interests of government, and hostile to the natural rights of man, as well as gross injustice to the masses.

Surprising as it may seem, the history of aristocracy reveals the astounding fact, that the population of Europe, numbering more than two hundred and fifty millions, submit to the tyranny

* Malte Brun, IV., 319

and dictation of about fifty-three reigning families, of which the highest nobility or relatives, including the younger branches, may amount perhaps to fifteen hundred individuals, whose fortunes, independent of their private income, exceeded a hundred millions of dollars, drawn from the pockets of the common people annually, indirectly by the machinery of aristocratic governments; and what is still more injurious to the political and moral interests of community, this money, so unjustly drawn from the public funds, is mostly spent in prodigality, and in maintaining the splendor and dignities of courts.*

In condensing the history of aristocracy within a narrow compass, we find a class of citizens imposing upon community as a superior race of beings, sometimes claiming to themselves divine honors; that they are the emperors of the world, who possess the sole right of governing and using the human race for their own gratifications and interests; whose fabulous and unfounded pretensions have always been disputed, on the one hand, by the reigning sovereigns, and on the other by an oppressed people. Nor is the sequel of this history in the least diminished in interest in modern times. Nobility has always suffered in this double fight with monarchy and democracy, until the rights of the people have gradually and successfully triumphed over aristocracy, to such an extent, as to render it not only highly probable, but almost certain, that at no distant day, democracy will unfurl the flag of freedom over the thrones, castles, and graves of tyrannical aristocrats, while the welkin of the universe will ring with the shouts of victory from a world of freemen.

The nobility of Poland, and the early aristocracy of the country, had its origin with the chiefs of the nomad tribes as early as

* Malte Brun, IV., 54.

the Christian era, and perhaps previous. They were called at that early day *szlachics*, or gentlemen, embracing foreign conquerors, and during the course of many ages became identified with the native aristocracy—the *semianin*, or possessors of land. This class of citizens progressively advanced in power and accidental distinction, until they assumed the title of barons under their dukes, previous to the reign of the Piasts, and finally became an organized body of aristocratic nobles under the Piasts, the Jagellons, and their successors. The early Polish voyvods or barons, by an united effort of extraordinary power, liberated themselves from the cruel tyranny of Popiel, their despot, duke, or leader—the last of a succession of chiefs—who had ruled them with a rod of iron for centuries, previous to the reign of Piast.*

In obedience to the unanimous voice of the people, the barons or nobles took Piast, a humble, worthy, and poor wheelwright, from his industrious shop, and enrolled his name among princes. Piast, as well as all his successors, was controlled by the nobles; and the will of the sovereign was never able to control this ungovernable aristocracy. Nor were the Polish nobility satisfied with ruling the king, even as early as the eighth century; but they held the entire population of the state as slaves, over whom they ruled with the power of life and death.†

The Polish nobles were first assembled in a diet by Wladislas, in the year 1331, and his example was followed by his successors. These assemblies were divided into two classes by the king, for the purpose of balancing power, consisting of the aristocracy or the influential nobles, and the numerous barons, who possessed the title of noblemen, but differing somewhat in influence and interest; while all the army who fought on horseback were nobles,

* Malte Brun, IV., 74. † Fletcher, 17. 18, 36.

including the *miles* and *nobilis*, which are synonymous. The nobles claimed and exercised the power of dictating the marriage of their sovereigns. They controlled Queen Hedwiga, the daughter of Louis, in her affections and marriage, and by coercive measures prevented the visits of William, the intended husband, and compelled her to marry Jagellon, the duke of Lithuania.*

The Lithuanian nobles were the most barbarous, despotic, and tyrannical to the slaves, though less in number than any other Polish province. They generally adhered to the Greek Church, being obstinate and ungovernable. The nobility of Lithuania were jealous of the more liberal Polish barons, and fearful of losing their absolute power over their serfs, resisted most strenuously all efforts at reform.†

All the nobles, as late as 1474, under Casimir, comprising the army of more than a hundred thousand horsemen, composed the general assemblies of the diets; but the great inconvenience of accommodating such numerous assemblies, compelled them to attempt the representative system of Europe. Dietines, or *colloquia*, had been held by each of the palatines in their palatinates for a long time, for the administration of justice, and had already begun to appoint deputies for the management of the public business. At length every district adopted the representative system in a restricted form, and in 1468 sent two deputies to a general diet. The first representative diet was convened to discuss the propriety of renewing the war against the Teutonic Knights. The representative system, by the obstinacy of the nobles, was a failure. The nobility of many of the provinces obstinately refused to surrender their rights to a deputy, and claimed the privilege of attending in person, or sending as many nobles to the diet as they

* Fletcher, 42, 44, 45. † Fletcher, 46, 47.

pleased. The deputies were bound to obey the instructions of their constituents, and the nobles continued their general meetings, in opposition to all attempts at reform.*

The nobles generally, and particularly those of Lithuania, were ever jealous of their sovereigns, and ready to trench on the rights of royalty, and trample on the serfs. The power of the aristocracy gradually became quite absolute, until they laid one hand on the throne, and the other on the people, with the power of life and death over both. Not satisfied with this, they included the commercial class in the proscription of rights, who were interdicted from becoming land proprietors, or possessors of church preferment.†

The nobility in Poland are still very numerous, amounting to nearly three hundred thousand. According to the old laws of the republic, the nobles were terrigenous; and every person who possessed a freehold estate, however small, or who could prove his descent from ancestors formerly possessed of such an estate, and who had not degraded himself by engaging in any kind of commerce, manufacture, or in any profession, was a nobleman or gentleman; the terms being synonymous. They were all considered equal in rank; and the titles of prince, count, etc., which some of them had, were not considered any additional dignity. Under the republic the nobility were everything, and the rest of the people nothing, or worse than nothing. The Polish aristocracy were absolute lords of their estates, and of the slaves who occupied them. They enjoyed the royal privilege of maintaining troops and constructing fortresses; and they only could elect the sovereign. No nobleman could be arrested until after conviction, except in cases of high treason, murder, or robbery on

* Fletcher, 50, 51. † Idem, 52, 53.

the highway; and then only when he was taken in the very act, which of course could seldom or never be done. Their houses were secure asylums for all to whom they chose to extend their protection, whatever might be their crimes; even their slaves could not be arrested, nor their property seized. They were exempted from all payment of tolls and other direct duties; and although the king could bestow titles, yet he had no power to create a nobleman or gentleman, that being the exclusive privilege of the diet.

Fortunately this state of things has been wholly changed by the humane hand of time and modern reform. Under the rigorous governments of Russia, Austria, and Prussia, the tyrannical privileges of the nobles have been suppressed. They can no longer trample with impunity on their inferiors with the power of life and death, nor commit offences without subjecting themselves to the full penalty of the law; and a poor gentleman no longer considers it a degradation to engage in some department of honest industry.* Though modernised to a considerable degree, the richer Polish nobles still continue to live in large castles, in a state of rude luxury and hospitality, entertaining the great numbers of their dependants, and such strangers as may happen to visit them. At their feasts the practice of sitting below the salt is still kept up, and the best dishes and wines are placed before the elite of the guests.†

The society of Poland for fifteen centuries, while they existed as a nation, was divided into two classes, the nobles and the peasants. The former are tall, robust, handsome, brave, frank, gay, courteous in their manners, and hospitable to strangers.

* Coxe's Travels, I., 102.

† M'Culloch's Universal Gazetteer, Art. Poland.

The latter are ignorant, indolent, servile, slaves to the nobles, and far superior to the former in numbers. Such a state of society, existing in the worst of extremes, for ever separated from each other by that impassable gulf which always divides nobility and slavery, ever has, and ever will, undermine any government, and ultimately wreck and crush any nation.

The nobility, containing five hundred thousand of a population of fifteen millions, jealous of their oppressed inferiors, and fearful of being compelled to divide their power with the people, should the lower class be elevated by rank, riches, or intelligence, stamped every lucrative or useful profession with the stigma of dishonor. It was their maxim, "That nobility is not lost by indigence or domestic servitude, but is totally destroyed by commerce and industry." Influenced by this absurd doctrine, they debarred the serfs from all knowledge of the use of arms, and all lucrative business, because they both feared and despised them. With these principles, alike hostile to all individual, social, and national interests, they lived and died, pitied by every friend of humanity for their ignorance and folly.*

As a natural consequence of this policy, while the nobles on the one hand were too proud, and on the other the serfs were too indigent and ignorant for the progressive interests of industry and commerce, every lucrative employment fell into the hands of a foreign race of avaricious Shylocks. The Jews, stimulated by these propitious circumstances, and their native cupidity of avarice, spread themselves like locusts all over the country, seizing on every branch of Polish industry and commerce, until more than two thirds of these scattered, covetous sons of Abraham

* Salvandy, I., 72, 73.

may now be found on the soil which formerly constituted the Polish dominions.*

The invincible nobles were neither overawed by the menaces, nor subdued by the power of the crown. For a long time their unconquerable democratic spirit would not suffer any distinction among themselves, but that which arose from actual employment; and never, until a very recent period, recognised hereditary titles of nobility. Their waywods or military chieftains, their palatines or leaders of counties, their castellans or governors of castles, held their offices for life. These offices were not always nominated by the king. Their power, and particularly the palatines, were equally offensive to the king and the nobles. It was their duty to obey the former, and lead the latter. In vain the kings of the Piasts attempted to establish a body of burghers by the side of the nobles, and graduate their democracy. Thus all the efforts of royalty to organize an orderly, systematical government, based on law and utility, were frustrated and paralyzed by the obstinacy and silly aristocracy of the Polish nobility.

Of all the forms of aristocracy which have prevailed in any government, Polish aristocracy is decidedly the worst. Unlike England, France, or any other government known to modern history, the aristocracy of Poland was the most exclusive, tyrannical, and ruinous. No one from the popular party could ever become a nobleman, however talented or worthy; and once a nobleman, always a nobleman, however vicious or degraded. This privileged class, exclusive in its organization, and limited to only five hundred thousand, of a population of fifteen millions, formed a school for the cultivation of the evil passions, and the practice of every vice. Their aspirations for royalty, and struggles for the

* Salvandy, I., 84, 85.

crown, involved them in almost continual domestic war, with the bitterest jealousies and family feuds, which descended from generation to generation for centuries. Ambition for crowns, an ungovernable thirst for war, fickle-mindedness in national policy, breach of treaties, repeated acts of treason, contempt for international law, and the continued violation of all law, both foreign and domestic, neglect of commerce, national and individual wealth, opposition to progression and all improvement, the introduction of foreign princes in preference to native political rivals, the slavery of fourteen millions of people without the possibility of emancipation, the neglect of education, opposition to sound legislation, immorality and irreligion, were the leading traits of character in the Polish nobility, and finally led to the conquest and dissolution of the nation. And were we to sum up all the causes which so fatally conspired in the fall of Poland, they could all be written in this short epitaph—*Poland was ruined by her nobility*.

Although this picture of Polish aristocracy is by no means shaded beyond the true limits of history, yet it is just to say that several of the nobility were true patriots, lovers of human freedom, and devoted their lives and fortunes to the interests of their country.

A system of aristocracy like that of Poland, which numbered more than all the other nations of Europe, and in truth embodied all the freemen of the Polish nation, is so odious and dangerous that no favorable conclusions can be drawn from it.*

* Alison, I., xvii.

CHAPTER IX.

DEMOCRACY.

Definition of Democracy—General Principles of Democracy—Democracy the best Government for any People—Education necessary to sustain Democracy—Origin and Progress of Democracy—Polish Democracy—Difference between Polish and American Democracy—Christian Democracy—Democracy of Greece, of Rome, of England, of France, of Germany, of Russia, of America—Aristocracy and not Democracy ruins Nations.

THE word *democracy* is derived from the Greek *demokratia*, which is compounded of two Greek terms, *demos* the people, and *krateo* to rule; and literally means, government by the people; or a form of government in which the supreme power is lodged in the hands of the people collectively, or in which the people exercise the powers of legislation. Such was the meaning of the term among the Grecian republics, where it had its origin. But in modern language, and particularly in the English tongue, it has a much wider range of thought; and especially in the United States of America, where democratic institutions are more extensively patronised. The word *democracy* is full of meaning, and has no synonyme in the English language; nor is it susceptible of a classical definition, so as to give the full force of its meaning. In order to convey to the mind a clear and full idea of the word democracy, as used by Americans, it requires nine words

to translate it, viz.—knowledge, liberty, equality, fraternity, benevolence, reciprocity, law, government, and progression. These nine words, when all their meanings are concentrated and brought out in their clear and full force, in reference to civil government, mean, that state of civil society, where the *greatest good of the greatest number* is the fundamental law of the land.

If we examine these nine words separately, we shall find that each expresses an indispensable ingredient of American democracy. The history of nations clearly proves that a democratic government cannot flourish without an educated community to sustain it. The education of the masses is the foundation and bulwark of a free government, and the most formidable weapon for the protection of human rights and republican institutions. The education of the American people in natural and moral science has fought their battles, extended their commerce to every sea and ocean, and organized the best and purest government on the globe. Although an educated people are necessary to sustain and perfect a democratic government, it by no means follows that such a government cannot succeed as well, at least, if not better, among a savage or barbarous people, than a monarchy, or any other form of government. That a democratic government may commence with education and religion, and succeed better than any other, is clearly proved in the history of the Sandwich Islanders. Liberty, one of the most prominent features of democracy, gives to every citizen, high and low, rich and poor, all the freedom of thought, speech, and action, which man is capable of enjoying, subject to the only qualification, that he must use his liberty without prejudice to others. Equality, one of the most important and familiar terms in the vocabulary of every true democrat, embraces equal rights, political, judicial,

moral, and religious. Without benevolence, there can be no democracy; for true democracy promotes the greatest good of every citizen, in harmony with the greatest good of the whole. But knowledge, liberty, equality, and benevolence cannot exist without fraternity—where all recognize each other as brothers of one great democratic family—mutually sympathising in each other's weal and woe—regardless of pomp and aristocratic rank, and repudiating all accidental castes and social distinctions not founded on moral worth. But all these characteristics of true democracy fall far short of the whole truth contained in its definition, without the beautiful feature of reciprocity. That state of society which regulates all its intercourse by the rule of *mutual forbearance* and *reciprocal concession*, is the most lovely feature of man in all his relations of life; and where civil society is governed by this principle, as in the United States, all the nations of the earth could never conquer her democratic institutions. Reciprocity is a fundamental principle in the government of Heaven, and so long as it remains the corner-stone of the American Republic, all will be safe, prosperous, and happy.

But all these democratic principles must be protected and supported by government and law—the warp and woof of nations. That democracy which is not founded on law and order, is the wild and crazy democracy of savages and barbarians; it is not the true American democracy. No government can long exist without wise and salutary laws, with an able and pure judiciary to administer them. All these several pillars of a democratic society must be bound together by government, the crowning arch of the great and sublime temple of liberty. Such a government, founded on the education, liberty, equality, fraternity, bene-

volence, reciprocity, and the law and order of the masses, is the government of the American Union; and the best in the history of human society. Nor should progression be wanting in this democratic picture. All human institutions, in their best estate, are imperfect, and require improvement by the hand of reform. As society advances, old things frequently become useless and antiquated; and new improvements supersede them, in the great work of human progression. A stationary democracy is not the democracy for the nineteenth century.

This democracy should pervade the whole body politic. Democratic society, democratic literature, democratic laws, democratic soil, democratic speech, democratic press, democratic morals, democratic religion, democratic government, and democratic institutions, form the boundary lines, the leading features of true democracy. That society which is divided into as many castes as there are aristocratic clans and wealthy families—where the many are the slaves of the few—where the only social standard is wealth, blood, and rank, irrespective of moral worth—is not the soil for the growth of true democracy. That literature which opens its schools and libraries equally free to all—where the masses are all taught, and the poor gratuitously receive the elements of a liberal education—where the minds of the rich and the poor are equally cultivated, is the democrat's literature. Those laws, where all classes have justice administered impartially, where the innocent and the guilty, black and white, rich and poor, learned and illiterate, all stand on an equal footing in the temples of justice; and all receive equal justice, and equal protection at the hands of an impartial judiciary, are the laws where democrats legislate, where freemen love to live and love to die.

That country, where all can own the soil, according to his means, free and clear of all claims, except lawful debts and just and equal taxes for the support of government, is the land where freedom lives, where democracy reigns. The freedom of speech, and the democracy of the press, responsible only for injury and abuse, are among the bright and best institutions of a free people.

Sound democracy appears to be the offspring of the nineteenth century. Though its germs appeared for a short time in Eden's bloom, during the primeval innocence of Adam, and perhaps had a feeble existence in his family, under the patriarchal government from Adam to Noah,—and notwithstanding the precious and tender plant grew but too feebly and sickly in the Grecian and Roman republics, and was transplanted with some success in the British soil of constitutional monarchy,—yet it was reserved by the councils of Heaven to have a free and luxuriant growth, for the first time in its history, in the American soil of the United States. Of all the various systems of democracy which have prevailed in the world, American democracy is the only system adapted to the conditions and wants of man, and the only government which will stand

"The wreck of matter and the crush of worlds."

It is founded on the eternal principles of truth and justice; it originated in Heaven, and will ultimately pervade the whole world. And every permanent improvement in government and civil society, which has been made in Europe and America during the nineteenth century—England not excepted—is borrowed from the institutions of the American Union.

Our transatlantic neighbors, who are not, generally, very favorably disposed towards democratic freedom, have frequently pointed

significantly to the democracy of Poland and its disastrous results, as the exponent of American democracy, and doomed ultimately to experience a similar fate. To relieve these European critics from any farther anxiety in relation to American and Polish democracy, we would call their attention to the fact that Poland never was a democracy, and never had a single ingredient nor a single feature of American democracy; nor is there any comparison between them, except what may be found in the very extremes of contrast. Poland never, at any period in her national existence, incorporated into her democracy either knowledge, liberty, equality, fraternity, benevolence, reciprocity, law, government, or progression: the nine fundamental principles of true democracy, as found in the government of the American Union. Of all the modern nations, Poland never had but few equals in ignorance and superstition. Their literary capital never was sufficient to sustain a government of any kind—not even an absolute monarchy—connected, as it was, with all the ruinous policy of the nation.

Poland never enjoyed democratic liberty. Their liberty consisted in allowing five hundred thousand nobles to do as they pleased,—dethrone their sovereigns and subvert their government when they wished,—to enslave thirteen millions of citizens, and cut their throats when it suited them. Such liberty Poland had, it is true, and such only; but, thanks to Heaven, it never existed in America. Poland had equality, but it existed only among the noble few who were allowed to play the tyrant, with the power of life and death over a population of fourteen millions; and, by a resort to the *liberum veto*, massacred their own members who entertained an honest difference of opinion on any question of politics. They had fraternity, but it never extended beyond the

ranks of the nobility; and, even there, it was frequently a fraternity of war and murder. Their benevolence never extended to the masses; there was no sympathy for the degraded, enslaved, and famished peasantry; no eleemosynary institutions for the relief of the unfortunate and distressed;

> "There was no flesh in their obdurate hearts,
> They did not feel for man."

Democratic reciprocity never was found in their vocabulary; they never had the *thing;* and, of course, they needed no word to express it. The nobility, ever true to their obstinacy, which they inherited from their ancestors—the ancient Medes—never surrendered their opinions on any question to the advice of their sovereigns, or the wishes of the people.

No such thing as law and order, in its modern acceptation, prevailed in Poland; and the few crazy fragments of their law codes and constitutions were disregarded, when the tyranny of the nobles found it for their interest; and their only laws were bribery, tyranny, and savage brutality. Anything like our orderly, systematic government never prevailed in Poland; their only government was the will of the nobility, and the only law which controlled that will, was, "*rule* or *ruin*." Progression, as we have seen in another chapter, was one of the many things they never possessed; and, as their barbarous ancestors of the first century left them, so, after a lapse of seventeen centuries, Russia, Austria, and Prussia found them, conquered, and devoured them.

A free country must have free citizens,—free citizens must have free minds,—free minds must have free principles,—free principles are wise and just principles, and are opposed to aristocracy, and all other institutions which do not promote the

greatest good of the greatest number. The Polish masses were lovers of liberty, and designed by Heaven for a free, democratic people. And although they have heretofore failed in their democratic aspirations, by resorting to means not adapted to the attainment of so laudable an object; and by misfortunes which they could not control—to say nothing of their vices, and the barbarous cruelty of their merciless tyrants,—yet the day is not far distant when Poland will be restored, and ultimately shine as one of the most brilliant stars in the bright galaxy of free nations.

Polish democracy consisted in *aristocratic* equality, and not in *democratic* equality, as Salvandy and Alison assert. Equality never existed in Poland except among the nobility, and in the proportion of five hundred thousand to fourteen millions five hundred thousand, in a population of fifteen millions. One of the principal causes of the never-ending calamities of Poland was their aristocratic equality; which was a prevalent disease in their moral and civil constitution from their earliest antiquity. On this principle their government and entire civil polity was constructed—a legacy which they inherited from their Scythian ancestors—which entailed upon them a succession of evils infinitely more disastrous than all the ravages of Scythian invasion. We have already seen that state representation was not found in the woods of Germany, but was one of the first offsprings of the Christian Church. What was found in the Sarmatian forests, was merely *Polish equality*—the same as aristocratic tyranny; but no *democratic* equality was ever found there. Instead of the masses enjoying democratic equality, they were cursed with the worst slavery and the most cruel tyranny, which has ever descended unimpaired to that miserable race, from generation to generation, from the remotest ages.

Equality is by no means peculiar to Poland: it is an elementary principle of human nature,—one of the inalienable and natural rights of man, pervading the whole human family, except in those unfortunate climes where tyranny has filched it from its rightful owners. The natural equality of man, comprehending his civil and religious rights, when so modified and controlled by law, government, and religion, as to promote the greatest good of the greatest number, constitutes true democratic equality—a production never found in Poland, and but seldom on the eastern continent.

The great and fundamental principle of Polish government, from the earliest times, was, that every freeman—meaning the nobility—had an equal right to the administration of public affairs, and that he was entitled to exercise this right, not by representation, but in person. The consequence of this pernicious example was, that the whole freemen of the country constituted the real government; and the Diets were attended by more than one hundred thousand horsemen, eight-tenths of whom were ignorant, half-civilised, and in necessitous circumstances; while all were inspired with an equal sense of their importance, as members of the Polish legislature.

The assembly of these tumultuous aristocrats was generally a scene of disorder and murder. Forty or fifty thousand lackeys, in the interest and service of the nobles, but still possessing the rights of freemen to a limited extent, followed their masters to the legislative halls of Volo, well armed and equipped from head to foot, who were alert to defend their reckless ambition by military violence,—while the unfortunate inhabitants, almost devoured by such an enormous assemblage of armed men, cherished the same prejudices in relation to such numerous military assemblages as

the natives of the Grecian city did towards the invasion of Xerxes,—where the citizens unanimously returned the most devout thanks to their gods that the armed hordes did not stay to dine with them, for the reason that the army had consumed everything eatable in their territory for a breakfast, and one meal more would have destroyed every living creature with famine.

The Poles carried their absurd, ruinous, and aristocratic equality so far, that, by a fundamental law of the government, called the *liberum veto*, any member of the Diet, by his individual negative, could prevent the election of the sovereign, or defeat any other public measure, however just or important for the interest of the country. Of course, among such a riotous, ignorant, and pugnacious multitude, there were always members who were ready to exercise this dangerous power, either from individual depravity, or external bribery and corruption; and hence, their legislative assemblies were dissolved without any action, and the interests of the State were surrendered as a prey to anarchy. And yet, strange as it may seem, this hallucination of Polish equality has ever been considered the Magna Charta of Poland, and has been ever adhered to with the tenacity of life; while its praises have been sung and lauded to the skies by their poets and historians, as the most precious gift of Heaven.

Such is the physical, intellectual, and moral constitution of man, that perfect unanimity of thought, feeling and action, in numerous assemblages, is impossible. The greatest extent to which modern civilization and social refinement has carried the unanimity principle, is found in the jury-system of twelve men; and even this doctrine has been most furiously assailed by many of the wisest statesmen and philosophers. All civil institutions must necessarily be subject to some check, which will ensure the

success of business on urgent occasions, in spite of individual opposition; and this protection can only be found in the majority principle, which is the only true democratic rule.

The Poles, however, always considered it utterly at variance with every principle of human freedom, to bind any freeman by a law to which he had not voluntarily consented. They regarded the principle, that the majority could bind the minority, as entirely inconsistent with every idea of liberty. But, as they found their equality system impracticable, and unnatural, they readily reached the terrible conclusion, that common justice required the *massacre* of the recusant. According to their politics, law, and religion, it was a much less evil to murder the *nays* than to out-vote them. Their argument was, that the instances of murdering their political opponents are few, and confined to the individual sufferers; but when once the rule is established that the majority can compel the minority to yield, no man has any security against the violation of his liberty.

It is equally true in the affairs of nations and of individuals, that extremes always sooner or later meet. He who doubts the truth of this proposition, will find a most satisfactory demonstration of the problem, in the monarchical bow-strings of the seraglio, the assassinations of St. Petersburg, and the massacres of Volo. How strange the political phenomenon, that the nation, professing the greatest jealousy of its liberty, should at the same time adopt a custom, of all others the most tyrannical and destructive to human freedom, by resorting to popular murders as the means of advancing the cause of civil liberty! And stranger still, that in order to avoid the government of *one*, they should submit to the despotism of *all!*

It was this insanity of aristocratic equality, which in every age

proved destructive to Polish independence, and was constantly undermining the kingdom, and ultimately paralysed the valor of the people, and reduced one of the most powerful nations of Europe low in the tomb of oblivion. Their false democracy insidiously infused itself into all the measures of government, and diseased every organ of the public body, with a palsied, unstable, and vacillating character, until their whole history is little more than a succession of patriotic bursts, followed by periods of the most gloomy dejection, without any fixed purpose of popular improvement, or any desire to advance the glory of the nation, by a stable and useful administration of a wise and useful policy, through all the varieties of fortune.

The maniacal madness of the nobility for aristocratic equality, was one of the principal causes of their deplorable, ruinous vacillation; the consequences of which may be clearly traced through all their history. We one day find them soaring to the skies in military prosperity, and the next hurled from their lofty eminence to the dust, by the death of a single chief, or the loss of a trifling battle. One day the nation advances its victorious army to the neighboring capitals, and in the wane of the same moon, are found struggling with an inferior enemy, for their own existence. They are hailed as the bulwark of Christendom in one age, and in the next they become the vassals of their once vanquished enemies, and nowhere found on the map of nations.

This levelling system reached the castles of princes and the palaces of royalty. They extended their equality proscription to the ranks of their greatest nobles; and, not satisfied with this, insulted the repose of the dead with the blackest calumny, as the reward of their best sovereigns, for their laudable efforts for the improvement of the government and the relief of the people. In

the estimation of the Poles, their only commodity worthy of respect and preservation, was the liberty and equality of the aristocrats.

Contrary to all other monarchical governments, the Poles never were contented but under the rule of feeble monarchs. Great and vigorous kings were uniformly the first victims of popular vengeance; and have invariably perished by their vain attempts to accustom an independent nobility to the beneficial restraints of authority, or soften to the enslaved masses the galling yoke of bondage. And thus the power of royalty, which elsewhere flourished on the ruins of the feudal system, in Poland continually languished with the progress of time. All the efforts of sovereignty to enlarge their prerogative and strengthen the government, were shivered to atoms, against a compact, impenetrable mass of aristocratic equality. So madly determined were the nobility in their false equality and perverted democracy, that they even rejected with disdain all distinction between themselves, and strenuously persisted to their last breath of national existence, in rejecting the tempting titles of honor from foreign states; and refused to recognize those hereditary distinctions and oppressive privileges, which, fortunately, are now fast vanishing from civil society. And what is still more surprising, they became so dementated with their hallucinations of equality, as to determine by law that *one*, in matters of state deliberations, should be equal to *all*.

This state of things, of course, presented the national phenomenon, of the sovereign being continually involved in war with a democracy of nobles. It was the long and constant aim of the Piast dynasty, to improve the condition of their subjects, by elevating to the side of the aristocracy a class of burghers, and

thus open the door for the gradual improvement of the peasantry; but they soon found to their great mortification and cost, that all social progression among a democratic nobility of half a million, was fatally enrolled among the number of impossibilities. Unlike all other states, where the sovereigns pursue a uniform and far-seeing policy, while their subjects are vacillating from one extreme to another, in Poland, the people, who were the nobility, were steady in their obstinacy, and the crown changeable.*

In other European, Asiatic, and African kingdoms, time had everywhere introduced the hereditary descent of stately honors and royal powers, reaching in one unbroken and continuous chain from the throne to the smallest fief; founded on the reciprocal necessity of subduing the vanquished, and securing to each his share in the conquests. But on the contrary, in Poland, the waywods, or warlike chieftains, the magistrates, and civil authorities, the governors of castles and provinces, so far from founding an aristocratic descent of their honors or offices in their families, were seldom even nominated by the king. The authority of the nobles, and more especially that of the Palatines, was equally offensive to the sovereign, whose right it was to rule, while it was the duty of the nobles to obey. Consequently, in the absence of sovereignty and popular obedience, government, law, and order, were not to be found in the republic.

It is no marvel that Polish democracy, which could allow no superior, nor spare any inferior, should become a by-word among all nations, detested equally by tyranny and freedom. In addition to all these democratic absurdities, fearing that they should at some future day be compelled to divide their power with their inferiors, who might be elevated by riches or intelligence, they

* Salvandy, I., 71.

stamped a stigma on every useful profession, as a mark of servitude and a barrier to social elevation. They invented the ridiculous and absurd maxim, that Polish nobility was not lost by indigence or domestic servitude, but totally extinguished by commerce or industry. Their short-sighted policy deprived the serfs of the use of arms, because their lords both feared and despised them. Such a democracy, regarding every species of superiority as a personal outrage, every authority as a usurpation, all industry as a degradation, is at variance with every principle of justice and human prosperity.

In vain were all the lessons of time, whose ceaseless course is ever ready to improve the condition of man, by breaking down the barriers between the aristocracy and the people, and by polishing that human equality which is found rough and unwieldy in the quarry of nature. It was the misfortune of Poland in all ages to differ from all other nations in their institutions, and more particularly in their democracy. This difference is found not in the nature of democracy, which is always humane, benevolent, and just; but it is owing to the ignorant obstinacy of the aristocracy, who blindly made the difference, and the abject slavery of the people who could not prevent it. True it is, with the progress of wealth an ephemeral race of burghers at length sprung up—an aristocracy of wealth and possessions arose, but both perished in their infancy. The first was soon overthrown; and in the convulsion consequent upon the establishment of the last, the national independence fell.*

The practical effects of this fatal equality may be clearly traced in their ruinous consequences in Polish legislation, as well as all their other institutions. The extreme difficulty of providing

* Salvandy, I., 74.

food for their assembly of one hundred thousand citizens on horseback, obliged the diet to terminate their deliberations in a few days, however pressing the affairs of state; and after having devoured all the food in the country, commenced a civil war, and separated without any legislative action. The frequent recurrence of such disasters at length led to an attempt to introduce territorial deputies, invested with full power to carry on the ordinary business of the state. But so adverse was any delegation of authority to Polish democracy, that this most useful institution never was sufficiently established to correct any of the former abuses. The king still remained the president of these tumultuous assemblies, surrounded by insurmountable obstacles on every side, controlled by generals and ministers not of his own choice, obliged to defend the acts of a cabinet which he could not control, against the cries of a furious diet. And these rude heterogeneous diets, who were assembled sabre in hand under the eye of the sovereign, to discuss all the important affairs of state, to declare war and make peace, to elect a sovereign, form laws, give audience to ambassadors, and administer justice in important cases, were still the Champ de Mars of the northern tribes, and retained to the very last all the vices of the savage character. There was the same confusion of powers, the same elements of disorder, the same license to themselves, the same tyranny over others, and the same wild democracy which had characterized the rude tribes from remote ages.

This attempt at a representative government was the death-blow to Polish sovereignty. The meeting of the deputies became fixed and frequent, and the power of the king expired without a successor. The representative system progressed but slowly, and in several provinces was never adopted. General

diets, where the whole nation assembled, became more rare, and therefore more perilous; and as they were convoked only on great occasions, and to discuss weighty interests, the phrensy of passion, superadded to the inexperience of legislative business, rendered their deliberations dangerous and useless. Soon their democratic equality rendered the representative assemblies the object of jealousy and hatred; and the citizens resolved to so limit the powers of the representatives, as to render them both harmless and useless. Frequently the equality-dreaming, jealous multitude, terrified at the limited powers they had conferred on their deputies, and seized with a sudden panic, rushed together from hill and valley, castle and hovel, and all quarters of the empire, with their arms in their hands, to watch over and protect their fabulous democracy from all legislative invasions. These tumultuous hordes, called "Diets under the Buckler," generally restricted and qualified the powers of the deputies previous to the election.

These democratic electors confined their parliaments to a circle of limited questions, gave obligatory directions, and held after every session what they called *post comitial diets;* the object of which was, to exact from every deputy a rigid account of the execution of their mandate. Thus every question of importance was in effect decided in the provinces before it was debated in the national assembly. As unanimity was still held essential to every decision, legislation was frequently rendered impracticable when there was found any variance between the instructions of the constituents to their deputies. Hence the majority were compelled to disregard the protestations of the minority; and the minority resorted to civil war as their only protection from the tyranny of the majority. Now commences a tragedy of murderous

democracy, which nowhere disgraces the leaves of history except in Poland. Confederations were organized, armed legions of discontented, ambitious nobles were found, who elected a marshal or president, and arrayed decrees against decrees, force against force, diet against diet, tribune against tribune, each holding the king alternately as a leader and a captive. Under the influence of such fiendish equality, how surprising that Poland could have existed even for a single year.*

The evil consequences of Polish equality have by no means been confined to the far-reaching plains of Sarmatia. The fall of Poland has ever been hailed by monarchy and aristocracy as the jubilee of tyranny, and the death of democracy. The aristocratic authors of Europe have nibbed their pens, and dipped them deep, for the worthy purpose of recording and ringing the requiem of human freedom, and the Te Deum of aristocracy. Of these worthy champions, Alison, the eloquent Alison, whose pen is worthy of a better theme, stands forth as the chieftain and Goliah of these enemies of democracy, who has penned the lines in the following note, equally disgraceful and calumnious to England and America, and every way unworthy of the great and good cause of human freedom.†

* Salvandy, I., 116.

† "There is no danger that the inhabitants of England or France will flock in person to the opening of Parliament, and establish diets of two or three hundred thousand freemen, with sabres by their sides; but there is very great danger that they will adopt the democratic jealousy of their representatives, and fix them down by fixed instructions to a course of conduct, which will both render nugatory all the advantages of a deliberative assembly, and sow the seeds of dissension, jealousy, and civil war between the different members of the state. This is the more to be apprehended, because this evil was felt in the strongest manner in France during the pro-

To these quotations might be added numerous others from Alison's Miscellaneous Essays, and particularly his Review of Bulwer's Athens, to say nothing of his repeated calumnies on republican principles, found on nearly every page of his History of Europe. Fortunately, however, for the friends of true liberty, Alison's principles are not found on the pages of the Broughams, the Scotts, and the Macaulays of England, nor are they sustained by more than three-tenths of the subjects of Great Britain. These wholesale charges on human freedom, coming, as they do, from a respectable but prejudiced pen, are worthy of at

gress of the revolution, and has appeared in America most remarkable, even during the brief period of its political existence. The legislators of America are not, in any sense, *statesmen;* they are merely *delegates*, bound to obey the directions of their constituents, and sent there to forward the individual interest of the province, district, or borough, which they represent. Their debates are languid and uninteresting; conducted with no idea whatever of convincing, but merely of showing the constituents of each member what he had done for his daily hire of seven dollars It is interesting to observe how much mankind, under all varieties of clime, situation, and circumstances, are governed by the same principles; and to trace the working of the same causes in Polish democracy, French revolutions, *American selfishness*, and British democracy.

"Whoever considers the matter dispassionately, and attends to the lessons of history, must arrive at the conclusion that this democratic spirit cannot co-exist with regular government or national independence in ancient states; and that Polish anarchy is the necessary prelude in all such communities to Muscovite oppression. The reason is eternal, and being founded in the nature of things, must be the same in all ages. When the true democratic spirit is once generally diffused, men invariably acquire such an inordinate *jealousy of their rulers*, that they thwart all measures, even of the most obvious and undeniable utility, and by a perpetual change of governors, gratify their own equalizing spirit at the expense of the best interests of the state. This disposition appears at present in France and England, in the

least a moment's review as to their history, veracity, principles, and consequences.

The great distinguishing feature of the religion taught by the Saviour of mankind, was its democracy. The Divine Master offered salvation freely to all who would submit to its easy and generous terms; and such was the universal benevolence of His heart, that He knew no distinction between a Dives and a Lazarus, except their moral difference; and so attentive was He in His democratic favors to the masses, that He would instantly

rapid changes of administration which have taken place within the last few years, to the total destruction of any uniformity of government, or the prosecution of any systematic plan for the public good; it appears in America in the execrable system of rotation in office; in other words, of the expulsion of every man from official situations the moment he becomes qualified to hold them, which a recent able observer has so well exposed; it appeared in Poland in the uniform weakness of the executive, and periodical returns of anarchy, which rendered them, in despite of their native valor, unfortunate in every contest, and at last led to the partition of the republic.

"Never was there a truer observation than that, wherever the tendency of prevailing institutions is hurtful, there is an under-current perpetually flowing, destined to correct them. As this equalizing and democratic spirit is utterly destructive to the best interests of society, and the happiness of the very people who indulge in it, so by the wisdom of nature it leads rapidly and certainly to its own destruction. The moment that it became paramount in the Roman republic, it led to the civil convulsions which brought on the despotism of the Cæsars; its career was rapidly cut short in France by the sword of Napoleon; it exterminated Poland from the book of nations; it threatens to close the long line of British greatness; it will convulse or subjugate America the moment that growing republic is brought in contact with warlike neighbors, or finds the safety-valve of the back settlements closed against the escape of turbulent multitudes."—*Alison's Review of Salvandy's History of Poland*, in Blackwood's Magazine: August, 1831.

suspend His journey amid the shouts and hosannas of the multitude, to listen to the cries of a beggar, and heal and save him; and, had He been about to create a world, He would have suspended the work to relieve the moanings of the needy and distressed. Such was the democracy of Heaven's only Son; and such only is the democracy of religion in a free country.

True democracy is another institution which the state has borrowed from Christianity. The Christian Church has ever been the cradle, the nursery, the school, and the bulwark of democracy. The democratic state shines with a borrowed light, reflected from the Great Sun of Righteousness. The language of Christian democracy is, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." Or, if we drop the beautiful drapery which the figurative language of the Hebrew prophet so sweetly throws over the sublime thought, the paraphrase may read thus: Come, all ye nations, tribes, and individuals of the whole earth, high and low, rich and poor, black and white, bond and free! Come to the temple of freedom! Come, partake freely and equally, of the natural rights of humanity, to which you are all freely and equally entitled, according to your moral excellence! Study your true interests, and partake richly of all the blessings of freedom, all the blessings of Christianity, and the bliss of Heaven, on the simple and easy terms of gospel faith, and of surrendering to the public good so much of your natural rights and democratic equality, as will best promote your own interests, and the greatest good of the whole!

Such is the language, such the nature, and such the terms of true democracy both in Church and State. Christianity has

always extended her spiritual and temporal blessings freely to all, on the same terms of moral worth. Her doors have been always open, alike for the slave and the freeman; and many of the brightest ornaments of the Church have been emancipated from the manacles of slavery, and elevated to the highest offices in her gift; and even in the dark ages, the slave always found an asylum of freedom wherever Christianity prevailed. Here is found a democracy containing all the ingredients of its nature, beautifully harmonized and mingled in the symmetrical proportions of knowledge, liberty, equality, fraternity, benevolence, reciprocity, law, government, and progression.

"When the dying slaveholder asked for the last sacraments, his spiritual attendants regularly adjured him, as he loved his soul, to emancipate his brethren, for whom Christ died. So successfully had the Church used her formidable machinery, that before the Reformation came, she had enfranchised almost all the bondmen in the kingdom except her own, who, to do her justice, seem to have been very tenderly treated."*

But the history of state democracy is of a widely different character, with a very few exceptions. Throughout the entire history of the Asiatic and African nations, from the creation to the present time, we meet with no traces of democracy except in the Hebrew nation. Greece had some feeble, imperfect notions of democracy; but they were limited to science, equality, and liberty, in a very imperfect state, without fraternity, benevolence, reciprocity, and with only a very imperfect government—a few fragments of law, and almost a stationary progression. The democracy of Rome was not much better than that of Greece; and, throughout all the European states, except England and

* Macaulay's Hist. England, I., 7.

France, history reveals only a few vestiges of democracy, which are so strangely amalgamated with aristocracy and monarchy, as to be difficult of recognition.

Throughout all Europe, England, since the fall of James the Second, has taken the lead in the cause of human freedom. Her democracy, second only to America, has been constantly progressing, gradually taking back its delegated sovereignty from the British crown, and, with a steady and sure purpose, reducing the power of the aristocracy, until the English sovereign has, in reality, very little more power than an American President, and the titles of nobility are almost nominal and useless. British democracy has opened wide all her doors and avenues to any subject who is competent and worthy for the highest offices in the army, the navy, the judiciary, the parliament, the cabinet, and peerage; and, in short, to every office in the gift of the government, except the crown.* The fraternity, benevolence, and reciprocity of Great Britain, are unsurpassed by any nation, ancient or modern, on the eastern continent; while her laws, government, equality, liberty, knowledge, and progression, are unrivalled, except by the country of Washington. The parental care of the British government, with watchful eyes which never sleep, guards every subject, however high or low, regardless of color or caste, from their embryo existence to the last slumbers of the tomb, with a vigilance more fervent than a father's love, more affectionate than a mother's caresses. A few years since, on the American shore of the great northern lakes, which flow between Canada and the State of New York, Durfee, an obscure American citizen, was laid low in death by a bullet, supposed to come from the musket of McLeod, a British subject, equally humble

* Macaulay, I., 11, 12.

and unknown. For this supposed murder, McLeod was arrested, indicted, and tried by the laws of New York, and fortunately found innocent. But no sooner was this obscure British subject deprived of his liberty for the supposed offence, than his benevolent government flew to his relief, over oceans and continents, and distances of many thousand miles, and demanded his immediate, unconditional release, on the ground that if he were guilty he acted in obedience to the high behests of his government, in defensive war. The American sovereignty refused to surrender the prisoner, for the reason that he had violated American law, by slaying an American citizen, and he must be tried and punished according to American law, regardless of all excuses and claims of his government. The two sovereign powers took issue on the question, and but for the fortunate circumstance of the prisoner proving his innocence, by showing an *alibi*, these two nations might have been involved in war in protecting these their obscure subjects, who were probably never heard of beyond a limited circle of family connections previous to the fatal occurrence.

In this case, we have a striking instance of British democracy —a democracy, too, which diffuses itself through every hill and valley—every castle and cabin—through every class of citizens throughout the vast dominions of the British empire, securing equal rights of life, liberty, and property, to every subject.

The democracy of Britain was thoroughly tested and settled in the English revolution of 1688. No revolution is found in the annals of time more thoroughly imbued with a pure democracy, and a sound public opinion. When we see the most powerful kingdom in the world rising in her might, in harmony with the masses of the whole empire, and with one united voice, by one powerful effort dethrone their tyrannical king, annihilate the

power of the Pope, abolish the Catholic religion, and establish on its ruins Protestant Christianity—adopt a constitutional monarchy, which leaves the crown a mere nominal power, places monarchy within the control of the democracy, and secures to the people all the freedom, rights, and privileges they desire—crown a new sovereign, known to be one of the most ultra democratic princes of the day, and remodel their jurisprudence on democratic principles, we feel no hesitation in pronouncing such proceedings democratic. And when we see that same nation retaining all these democratic achievements, and yearly adding fresh democratic victories to their common stock of republican principles—progressively yielding to an enlightened public opinion, from the coronation of William and Mary to the middle of the nineteenth century, through an uninterrupted period of more than one hundred and fifty years, notwithstanding they retain a nominal and powerless sovereign, a nominal and harmless aristocracy, and a few vestiges of the superannuated trappings of an absolute monarchy, we have no hesitation in recording the sentence that such a nation is, in reality, a democracy. And, when it is remembered that all these republican victories were won by the British masses without firing a gun, or shedding a single drop of blood, but were achieved by the power of moral suasion, and the sound public opinion of the British populace, our surprise increases at every step in the history of English freedom, that Alison should find in all these noble deeds of democratic daring, no praise for the people, no laurels for republican principles, and should stigmatize the whole history of democracy, both in Europe and America, as dangerous to the best interests of civil society.*

That the British government needs improvement to render *it*

* Macaulay, II., 393—395.

a full and complete democracy like America, is not denied. And were it required to draft a bill containing all these republican improvements, so as to make a nominal democracy of England—although it is in reality such now—the whole law could be written on a very small piece of paper, and contained within a few words. A fundamental law extending the right of suffrage, abolishing titles of nobility, abolishing the crown, and rendering the sovereign and parliament elective by the people, reducing prodigal salaries, separating Church and State, and making a few slight and useful improvements in the jurisprudence of the country, would accomplish the entire work of rendering Britain a nominal as well as a real democracy; without sacrificing a single dollar of any citizen's property, or infringing on the useful rights of any subject.

French aristocracy and monarchy die hard. The history of French democracy is stained with the heart's blood of patriots and tyrants from the commencement of the Christian era. No man, who is worthy of the name of man, can read the history of the French Republic, without the most thrilling emotions of joy and grief at every page of their alternating prosperity and adversity, which reaches back more than eighteen hundred years. It would almost seem that Heaven had reserved the soil of France as the common battle ground of human liberty. It requires all the philosophy and religion within the command of humanity, to resist the tempting delusion that the French were made to fight through the battles of freedom not only for themselves, but for all the world. The very soil of this democratic people loves to drink the blood of tyrants. The rivers delight in rolling the corpses of freedom's enemies down their mighty channels. The murmuring rills cheerfully mingle with the gushing gore of the

combatants battling for freedom. And indeed all languages seem to blush, that they have no words adequate for the description of French battles devoted to the cause of liberty; and the hands of the very best nerves, tremble and drop the pen, as they attempt to record the bloody story of the millions of human beings, and the millions of treasure which France has sacrificed in their struggles for freedom.

That the general aim and end of the French wars, in the cause of humanity, were worthy and laudable, seems to be conceded on all hands by impartial judges; but the means in many instances deserve the universal condemnation of all. But it must be constantly borne in mind, by the student of history, as he passes down from ancient Gaul through the subsequent annals of the French battles, that no nation on earth has had so many obstacles to surmount in their aspirations for democracy, as liberty-loving France. From the earliest history of this people, they have been the firm friends of democratic freedom; though their zeal has not in all cases been according to knowledge. And although their democracy has ever been very imperfect, and destitute of some of the most important features of the institution, yet France has done more for the general diffusion of republican principles than any other nation on the globe. They have fought the battles of freedom for themselves, for America, Poland, England, Germany, Switzerland, Egypt, Palestine, and the world at large, and blazed the light of science and democratic freedom through every continent; and yet humanity weeps that their democracy is far from being pure and complete. And may Heaven save them from that awful calamity which sometimes awaits authors, inventors, and pioneers, who confer the choicest blessings on others, and save none for themselves.

Germany, the cradle of monarchs and nursery of aristocrats, is destined soon to have neither. They have already dug their own graves; and the rising democracy of the country, found in their thousands of schools, and the millions of children of all classes which daily attend them, will soon attend the funeral of German tyranny, and turf over its grave without a sigh or a tear. Pure democracy always advances in a country with education and religion, and aristocracy cannot long exist where Luther and the schoolmaster travel hand in hand.

Russian democracy, planted by Peter the Great, and nourished by Paul, Alexander, and Nicholas—unintentionally it is true—which has already reached the swelling bud, will soon blossom, until the whole regions of the north will be redolent with the choicest flowers of freedom. Who does not see that the entire eastern continent is now in a rapid transition state, and that the fountains of the great deep are soon to be broken up, and liberty succeed to tyranny? Who does not see that the vast and unwieldy Russian empire contains the seeds of its own dissolution in the Cossack and Polish provinces, whose union is almost a certain event, and whose combined power is sufficient to crush the empire of the Czar any moment.

It is now more than half a century, that our ears have been filled with the dismal prophecies of European tyranny, that American democracy was a *felo de se*, and would soon commit suicide. The doctrine of such prophets as Alison is—that American democracy has no statesmen, no sound principles of law and order, and no other "safety valve," than the backwoods of the western world. Such sweeping declarations show him a mere tyro in his knowledge of American institutions. America no statesmen! Look at her long catalogue of eminent men,

including the Pilgrim Fathers; the signers of the Declaration of Independence—the presidents of the Republic, and their able cabinets—the thirty-one national congresses, embracing the able senators and representatives, who have, in rotation, governed the nation successfully for sixty-two years—together with the profound jurists, who have composed the Supreme Court of the nation from its organization to the present time—as well as scores of other eminent citizens, both living and dead, who have wielded a powerful influence in forming the character of the nation, and then show us their superiors in numbers, talents, wisdom, and moral excellence in Great Britain, or in any other nation on the globe, during the same period? But the same learned critic complains that the American debates are without interest! Perhaps the gentleman has not read all the eloquent volumes which contain them; or he may have overlooked the herculean debates of Webster and Hayne; or the powerful and eloquent speeches of both houses of Congress in 1849 and 1850!

A statesman is a man versed in the arts of government; usually one eminent in political abilities; one employed in public affairs. In order to determine the character and abilities of American statesmen, it is only necessary to study their history and works. But the subject of American democracy and American institutions, will be further examined in a subsequent chapter, in comparing America with Poland and Europe, where we intend to meet fully the aspersions of European critics, which they have so long and so lavishly heaped upon American democracy.

Alison complains of the democracy of Greece, Rome, and Poland; and so he may, for they never had any. The very few and imperfect republican principles cherished in Greece and

Rome, never were sufficiently developed and matured to afford much stability to their governments, or give any permanent relief to the people. But when our author groups together in one sentence, the democracy of Greece, Rome, Poland, Russia, Germany, France, England, and America, and pronounces them all one and the same thing, he betrays a want of discrimination, of knowledge in the principles of the several governments and their institutions; and, consequently, confounds things no way similar or connected, and fails to do justice to the several countries, whose institutions he seems to misunderstand.

Whoever studies the history and science of law and government, including ancient as well as modern nations, will not fail to reach the conclusion, that, as a general rule, monarchs and aristocrats are the authors of all the political disasters which have injured and ruined nations, and not the people; and the only exceptions to the rule are those few and extreme cases where the masses have been led to revolts and revolutions by artful and designing princes, or have been excited to the work of ruin by the tyranny of their rulers. In nine-tenths of the cases where nations have fallen, the people have not been responsible. Poland was never ruined by the democracy of the people, for they never had any. Poland did not fall by the hand of the masses, for they were not permitted to participate in the struggles of the nation.

It is a well-settled principle in the history of moral science, that by far the greater portion of the virtue and intelligence of this world is found only among the middling classes of society. It is from the common people,—from the masses,—that nearly everything great and good among men arises. This is the nursery of great men, of great discoveries, of useful enterprise, and

valuable inventions. It is not from the general community that danger is to be apprehended, except in the extreme cases already mentioned. Kings and aristocrats are the authors of oppression and misery; it is their abuses and misrule which have caused popular insurrections, and buried so many nations in oblivion. It is the virtue, intelligence, patriotism, and democracy of the middle and lower ranks, which form the bulwark of a nation. Kings may err, ministers may be guilty of injustice; but the people—when once informed—who are in their workshops and their farms, who love their homes, their families, their country, and their God, are not disposed to ruin the nation which gave them birth, nor hazard their property, their lives, and their all, in the dangers of revolution, for the purposes of acquiring power, wealth or fame. The honest yeomanry of the country are much less liable to deception, reckless ambition, and corruptions, than princes, whose votaries are generally hypocritical flatterers and base deceivers. And the farther we extend the parallel between aristocracy and democracy, the more striking is the comparison in favor of the people, and the safety of their power. True democracy makes superiors condescending, equals courteous, and inferiors respectful; and binds together all classes with the ties of fraternity, benevolence, and reciprocity, on the wise and liberal principles of equal rights.

CHAPTER X.

SLAVERY.

Nature and Principles of Slavery—Origin and Progress of Slavery—Different Kinds of Slavery—Its general Effects on Society—Slavery of Poland—The number of Polish Slaves—Their Condition—Effects of Polish Slavery on Domestic Society.

Domestic slavery consists in the right of the master to control the physical and intellectual actions of the slave, for the master's individual benefit and happiness. This right is founded on the principle that the relation between master and slave is not the human relation of man to man, but is a modification of that which exists between man and the brutes; and denies the slave the free possession and enjoyment of life, liberty, and property—the inalienable rights of man. This institution proceeds upon the principle that masters and slaves are, by creation and Divine appointment, two different classes of beings of entirely dissimilar rights; that the master possesses all the rights of the slave, without the consent of the slave,—if, indeed, he ever had any rights. It assumes that the Creator originally intended one human being to control the physical, intellectual, and moral actions and interests of as many other human beings as he can bring within his physical power by conquest or purchase, and that one human being may thus secure a lawful right to sacrifice the life, liberty,

and happiness of any other number of other human beings for the promotion of his own,—in the gratification of the master's avarice, licentiousness, and vicious propensities.*

The slave is supposed to be the exclusive property of his owner, as a physical, intellectual, and moral being. It claims the exclusive right of the master to control the *physical* labor of the slave for his exclusive benefit, regardless of the happiness and rights of the unfortunate victim. The amount of labor, the kind of labor, and the remuneration of labor, are wholly governed by the will of the master, without the least interference on the part of his slave. It is an indispensable assumption in the institution of slavery that, not only the physical powers of the doomed creatures are the property of the master, but, inasmuch as the slave can be held in bondage only while he remains in mental imbecility and in ignorance of his power and human rights, the master is supposed to have the undoubted right to control his intellectual powers, and deprive his slave of the blessings of education, religion, and improvement, for the worthy purpose of maintaining the more secure and servile subjection. Or, at least, if the slave have any right to use his intellect, he cannot use it for his own happiness, but only for the profit and gratification of his own master.

But the interests of slavery demand and assume still another hypothesis which is equally essential to its support. The slaveholder, not content with his firm grasp on the physical and intellectual powers of his serf, claims the supreme power over his moral interests. This assumption is founded on the principle, that inasmuch as the acquisition of the slave's knowledge of his moral and religious duties to God could not be received without

* Wayland's Moral Science, 206. Encyclopædia Americana, II., 429.

the possession of other knowledge, which might endanger the power of the master; slavery, therefore, as a matter of *might* rather than *right*, deprives its victims of religious instruction and enjoyment, except in such a stinted and perverted manner as to debase and demoralize the vassal rather than improve and elevate him to the purer enjoyments of a future existence. Such is the creed of slavery in all ages and nations; and we leave its philosophy, its utility, its honor and justice, to the protection of its founders and advocates.

Slavery had its origin originally in conquest; and subsequently was extended by birth, purchase, imprisonment, or slavery for debt, and punishment for crime. Slavery by conquest, birth, and purchase, are the principal links in its chain of title. The history of our race shows very clearly that the empire of reason is slow in its advances and triumphs over the kingdom of force. This principle is gradually developed as we trace the history of political institutions, and particularly in the relations of husband and wife, parent and child, master and servant. Domestic slavery originated in the power of the strong over the weak, the triumph of might over right, and the supremacy of the rich over the poor. In the infancy of society, man uses his physical power to accommodate his own pleasure. And, although natural affection may control him in a great measure in the domestic relations of his wife and children, yet no such restraint exists between him and his slaves. As slaves were probably at first captives, it was natural for the savage and barbarous victors to suppose that they had the absolute right over the life, liberty, property, and happiness of the vanquished; and, of course, the latter was regarded as entirely at the disposal of the former, who, if he chose to spare him, had the right to subject his cap-

tive to any restraint, service, or infamy, the victor pleased. The principle on which slavery originally rested, was well adapted to the rudest condition of society, and has remained substantially the same, with a few exceptions, to the present time.

Slavery having thus originated, its continuance has ever since been favored by a variety of circumstances. The Asiatic chiefs of the nomadic tribes, became conquerors or priests—originating from the heads of families—who, in the infancy of barbarous society, regarded their domestic dependents in the light of property, as much as they did their flocks and herds; and from these two classes all the political institutions in Asia had their existence. The conquerors soon established absolute despotisms, in which the persons and property of their subjects were entirely at the disposal of the sovereign; and hence arose political slavery, without legal right or legal relations between sovereign and subject. This state of political slavery soon furnished a great support to domestic slavery, by the seeming analogy between the government of a family and the rule of a king. The ambitious priests of the early and dark ages, fond of power and servile praise, organized their numerous unprincipled castes, elevating themselves to the head of these social organizations, which they willingly used as make-weights in favor of slavery. In Athens, slaves were treated with some humanity; but in Sparta and Rome, with great severity. By the Roman law, if a master were killed, all the slaves who were found under the roof, or near enough to be able to hear the cry of the murdered man, were put to death. The right of the master over the life of his slave was first abolished in the time of the Antonines, in the second century, A. D. When slaves were ill treated by a third person, the Aquilian law only allowed the owner of the slave to

demand satisfaction in damages. But in Athens, the murderer of a slave was punished sometimes with death. Modern legislation, and particularly in America, has furnished additional protection to the slaves, from the abuses of the owner in some cases, but, as yet, with very little success, for the reason that no legislation can ever protect effectually a human being whose physical, intellectual, and moral powers, are the property of another. Similar reasons and laws have governed the institution of slavery from its origin to the present day.*

Philosophy allows of no obligation from one man to another without an equivalent; and the fundamental principle of human slavery, which subjects a man, and all that he has and is, to the absolute disposal of a master, who is not bound on his part to render anything in return, is in violation of natural, moral, and religious law, and at war with every sound principle of judicial law and civilisation. The slave, being treated as property, and deprived of legal and human rights, cannot be under legal obligation. Such an institution, so unnatural, inhuman, and unjust —a base relic of the early and still more corrupt middle ages— so chilling and paralysing to the better feelings of humanity, and at war with every modern improvement—justice and common honesty, of course—must be attended with the worst consequences to the morals of both master and slave.

Slavery, in its numerous degraded forms, furnishes every variety of unworthy objects for the gratification of the master's base passions, without resistance or redress; and cultivates in his bosom prodigality, pride, anger, cruelty, selfishness, and licentiousness,—producing disease and premature death. While on the other hand, by accustoming the slave to surrender his moral

* Encyclopædia Americana, XI., 421.

principles to the will of his cruel tyrant, it soon abolishes in him all moral distinction of right and wrong; and educates him in lying, deceit, hypocrisy, dishonesty, and a willing subjection to the low appetites of the master.*

The effects of slavery, on individual and national wealth, are equally unfavorable. It renders labor disgraceful, by limiting the number of laborers, or producers, to the least possible number; instead of imposing upon *all* the necessity of industry. It removes from the laborers the natural stimulus to industry, and a laudable desire for the honest acquisition of wealth; and substitutes in its place the less worthy motive of fear of punishment, without the consciousness of guilt. It retards both parties in the cultivation of frugality, for the reason that neither the master learns economy from the necessity of labor, nor the slave from the benefit which he would otherwise receive from it. Slavery is equally destructive to agriculture. No country can long sustain a large slave population. And hence, the most fertile soils of the best agricultural districts have failed, and become nearly worthless, by long continued slave labor.

No nation has ever survived slavery, where the experiment has been tried long enough to develop its fatal consequences, without abolishing it. National prosperity and slavery cannot stand together. The union, sooner or later, must necessarily be severed by the death of one or the other, or both perish together. The institution is inconsistent with the physical, intellectual, and moral constitution of man; and cannot long exist with civilization, literature, morals, and religion.

Wherever national slavery has been tried, the slaves soon outnumber their masters, and ultimately become reckless, selfish,

* Wayland's Moral Science, 207.

and ungovernable, traitors to their country, and enemies to their owners. Their condition, feelings, associations, and relations, all combine to render them unprofitable in business, cowards and traitors in war, and midnight assassins in peace. They are under no moral obligation to those who enslave them, and, of course, they feel none. Nature has no common tie sufficiently strong to unite the master and slave for any great length of time. Talleyrand's magic rule of policy, for uniting the bitterest enemies, by creating a common interest, has no application here. The God of nature has never created any common interest between slavery and freedom, and art has failed to supply it. No sagacious general ever trusted them in the field; and, of all the many thousand battles lost and gained, slavery has never won a single laurel.

England and France, after trying slavery for more than ten centuries, have wisely reached the same conclusion, and abolished it. America, now only in the sixtieth year of her national existence, has abolished the slave trade, and demolished the institution, with a few, lingering, modified exceptions, which are doomed to die at no distant day. Russia feels the force of these humane examples, and will soon follow the steps of her wise predecessors; and slavery must soon retire from the civilized world.

Irrespective of all moral considerations, it is a question well worthy the serious consideration of every nation and statesman, whether slavery, even if it ever were productive of any national or individual good, has not become a superannuated institution, unworthy and useless, in the middle of the nineteenth century.

"I would not have a slave to till my ground,
To carry me, to fan me while I sleep,

And tremble when I wake, for all the wealth
That sinews bought and sold have ever earn'd."

Such is the testimony of all history in relation to slavery—the unanimous verdict of all nations, who have tried the experiment; and philosophy honors it—while Christianity responds a hearty amen.

The slavery of Poland was the worst kind. In every point of view it was destitute of a single redeeming feature. The overpowering numbers of thirteen millions of slaves, in a population of fifteen millions; the ignorance of the slaves; their degraded moral condition; the cruel tyranny of their masters, consisting of five hundred thousand nobles; their squalid poverty; the mutual jealousies and hatred of both master and slave—superadded to the usual evils of this dangerous and ruinous institution—all conspired in the final destruction of masters and slaves. Polish slavery, like the early slavery of Asia and Europe, had its origin in military conquest. The nomad tribes of Sarmatia, and their predecessors, as early as the commencement of the Christian era, and perhaps before, by their repeated predatory invasions and conquests in the surrounding provinces, collected immense numbers of captives, who were compelled to perform the servile labor of their tyrannical lords, to collect the cattle, drive the wagons, and make the arms. These ungoverned lords, acknowledging no superior to themselves, knew no restraint in the treatment of their slaves. These unfortunate prisoners, unjustly captured in these predatory wars, with their posterity, were ever after retained in bondage, and formed the peasantry, or slaves of Poland. They were divided among the conquerors, barons, or nobles, and became their property, attached to their lands the same as their flocks and herds. We only wonder that the public body should

have continued to breathe, or even gasp, through fifteen hundred years, with such a millstone around its neck, with such a viper preying upon its vitals, with such a leprosy gangrening the whole system, as Polish slavery.*

The slaves, conscious of their wrongs, were always ready for treason and revolt, when an opportunity presented. In the early part of the reign of Casimir I., and, during his temporary abdication, while the throne was vacant, a general scene of saturnalia ensued in Poland. The serfs, imitating the example of their masters, who drove the young king from the throne, rose in a body, and retaliating the cruelties which they had so long suffered, by a united reaction equal to the pressure, crushed the whole system of servitude, and for a season were freemen. The repeated insults which these infuriated hordes had received from the clergy, who taught the nobles from the pulpit how to abuse the slaves most effectually, called down the revenge of the angry peasantry, indiscriminately on Bibles, churches, monks, and masters, until all were made one great sacrifice of atonement to the enraged serfs, on the idolatrous altars of their ancestors. The *lex talionis* —that law, which the finger of revenge has always engraved so deeply on the human heart, was the only law of these infuriated hordes. They had been trained in the schools of their masters to plunder, tyrannise, murder, and rebel; and the pupils showed by practice, how thoroughly they had learned their lessons.†

Nor were the domestic relations exempt from the contamination of slavery. The long continued wars of Poland, prolonged in many instances for five, ten, fifteen, twenty, and thirty years, entailed upon society all the vices and ravages of war, mingled with the horrid and degrading evils of slavery. The slaves, du-

* Salvandy, I., 107, 108. † Fletcher, 23.

ring the protracted absence of their masters in foreign wars, as a natural sequence of such causes, seduced their mistresses, and, by these licentious alliances, the peace and purity of domestic society were not only sacrificed, but the lords on their return, resented these insults, sword in hand; until the most horrid spectacle ever witnessed by humanity, was seen in the domestic wars, growing out of these unhallowed connections. The wives and their servile paramours, with their illegitimate offspring, were found arrayed side by side, in deadly fight with the husbands; who charged upon those they once loved and cherished, with sabres bathed in the heart's blood of kindred they once held most dear, while wives, children, servants, and masters, perished in one common slaughter.*

The cultivators of the soil in Poland, previous to the dismemberment, were almost exclusively slaves. The lands of Poland, about one third of which was owned by the crown, and the other two thirds by the nobility, were generally occupied by the peasants, on condition of working a stipulated number of days in each week, on the lands of their lords, besides paying them certain stipulated quantities of poultry, eggs, yarn, &c. The extent of their holdings varies according to the quality of the lands, the quantity of work to be performed, and the payments to be made. On a large property examined by Mr. Jacob, the peasants had each about eight acres of land, for which they were bound to work two days a week with a pair of oxen. If their further labor was required by their lords, they were paid at the rate of three pence sterling for two days more; and, if they were occupied longer, they received six pence a day. On another estate examined by the same learned gentleman, the slaves had

* Fletcher, 27.

about thirty-six acres each; for which they worked two days a week with two oxen; and when called upon for extra labor, they were paid six pence a day for themselves and their oxen for the next two days, or without oxen three pence. Under the republic, the Polish peasants were slaves, and the absolute property of their masters, and did not, in fact, enjoy any greater liberty than the blacks in South America or the West Indies, at the present day. As late as 1768, a lord who had killed his slave was merely fined a small sum; and, though in that year, the murder of a slave was made a capital offence, yet such an accumulation of evidence against the lord was required by law to prove the fact, that the law was entirely useless, and still left the life of the slave at the disposal of his master with impunity.*

It was usual to make the slaves work five days a week on the estates of their lords. It was lawful for the masters to seize, at pleasure, on whatever property their slaves had; inflict on them whatever corporal punishment they pleased; and sell them as they did their cattle. The boasted and far-famed freedom of Poland, was, in truth and reality, merely the unlimited and tyrannical license of the nobility to do as they pleased; to trample under foot the mass of the people, and murder them at pleasure; browbeat and dethrone their sovereign, and sell their votes to the highest bidder. To this general character of the nobility, Zamoyski, Czartoryski, and others, were noble and humane exceptions. This worthy class of the nobility, early foresaw the ruinous consequences of such a state of society, and, after emancipating their own slaves, used all the means in their power to improve their condition. Under these miserable circumstances, the Polish peasantry, at the dismemberment of the republic, were

* Coxe's Travels, I., 113.

in the lowest state of degradation, being ignorant, indolent, addicted to drunkenness, poor and improvident in the extreme.*

The servile labor of the peasants was modified by the constitution of 1791; and was wholly abolished in the duchy of Warsaw in 1807. By these humane laws, the services and taxes of the slaves due to their lords, were defined and regulated, so as to permit them to leave one part of the country and settle in another, after they had first paid off all the debts they owed their lords. But their inability to comply with this, and several other restrictions, equally rigorous and impracticable, render the laws useless, insomuch, that they seldom leave the estates on which they were born. When a young peasant marries, his lord assigns to him a certain quantity of land, barely sufficient for the maintenance of himself and family, with a plenty of hard labor, economy, and poverty; and if the family become numerous, some little addition is made to the scanty estate. The young married couple, also, obtain a few cattle, as a cow or two, with steers to plough their land. The master sometimes provides them with a cottage, like an American log-cabin, or an Indian's wigwam; sometimes hardly a comfortable shelter for an ox—much less for a human residence. To this outfit is added a few cheap implements of husbandry; and with all these facilities, owing to the influence of old habits, only few peasants improve their little stock; but prefer a life of poverty, intemperance, and sensuality. A few, however, of these unfortunate beings, by industry, economy, and civilization, become proprietors of the soil in modern times; while others have hired more extensive farms. But, as slavery is substantially the same thing the world over, in all ages and nations, and ever attended with the same ruinous consequen-

* Coxe's Travels, I., 14.

ces, both to masters and servants, it will require a lapse of many years, before the condition and habits of the Polish peasantry can be materially improved.

The common diet of the peasants is cabbage, and sometimes potatoes, though not generally; together with pease, black bread, and soup, or rather gruel, without butter or meat. Their chief beverage is the cheap whiskey of the country, which they drink in quantities that would shock the sobriety of all the rum shops of Europe and America. Their disgusting and filthy clothing is described in a subsequent chapter. These are to be regarded as the general characteristics of Polish slavery, which depend much on the character of their lords; and are varied very much by the prosperous or adverse condition of the estate to which they belong. The peasants of those estates owned by opulent, benevolent, and enlightened nobility, are more comfortable and improved than on those lands where an opposite state of things exists. As usual in all slave states, the compulsory services performed on the estates of the masters, are done in the most negligent and slovenly manner. In Poland, the operations of husbandry were so badly conducted by the peasantry, the ploughing so shallow and irregular, and the harrows, with wooden teeth, not penetrating sufficiently deep to root up the weeds in fallowing, that the land was always foul, and in bad order. The same want of attention prevails in harvesting and threshing. This ruinous system of slave labor is strikingly visible on all the estates of the kingdom.*

Casimir, and other friends of humanity, made laudable efforts to improve the condition of the serfs, until they were relieved from some of their heaviest burdens temporarily; but they were

* See McCulloch's Universal Gazetteer, Art. Poland.

too late and inadequate to afford much relief to a peasantry, who had been writhing under all the agonies of slavery, for more than fifteen centuries.*

Notwithstanding the Polish peasantry had suffered for so many centuries the most direful effects of slavery, yet we find them possessed of many noble traits of character. Natural intelligence, beauty of person, courage, patience under suffering, the love of liberty and their native country, were their most prominent characteristics. Under a Kosciusko, whom they loved, they fought for their country, with the courage of Spartans; and mowed down the invading Russians with their scythes, in swarths of death, which struck terror into the hearts of the foe, and secured immortality for the victors in the history of nations. And who could expect more than this of the most unfortunate, oppressed, and injured people of the whole world? Deprived of education, religion, law, liberty, property, and every right of man, our astonishment increases at every redeeming feature in their character; and humanity contemplates with delight, every worthy deed in the history of their wrongs and injuries. Such has been the slavery of Poland, since the invasion of Britain by Julius Cæsar, and such will ever be its history, as long as Heaven sustains the wide difference between right and wrong—between liberty and slavery.†

* Fletcher, 40.

† Fletcher, 46, 52; Alison, chap. 17; Connor's Hist. of Poland, II., 166.

COPERNICUS.

Lith. of C. Michelin 180 Fulton St.

CHAPTER XI.

GREAT MEN.

[illegible] Principles of Human Greatness—Copernicus—Socinus—Kosciuszko—Sobieski—Other Great Men of Poland.

SECTION I.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF HUMAN GREATNESS.

[illegible]

CHAPTER XI.

GREAT MEN.

General Principles of Human Greatness—Copernicus—Sobieski—Kosciusko —Other Great Men of Poland.

Section I.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF HUMAN GREATNESS.

Thus far we have viewed Poland in her sombrous phases; and with pleasure we may now turn to the contemplation of her great men, which affords the most brilliant view in her dark history. Variety is one of the most interesting laws in the universe; and its prevalence is not less extensive in the moral, than in the material world. In every direction we find all creation adorned, enriched, and beautified with the most lovely and thrilling diversity, designed to cheer and encourage us in the pursuit of virtue and happiness, and confirm our hopes and future prospects. The mineral kingdom has scattered its choicest metals and gems in the barren rocks and sands of uncultivated regions; and thereby, not unfrequently rendering the sterile mountains and deserts more valuable for their minerals than the most fertile soils for their productions. The sweetest flowers of the botanical kingdom, beautifully variegate the more common plants of every hill and valley in the globe's circumference;

and the feathered songsters relieve the tedium of the world, by the sweetest notes of their musical art, in every lawn, hill, and valley known to man. Nor is this interesting law wanting in the moral world. History knows no age, no clime, no human society entirely destitute of noble specimens of moral excellence. The antediluvians had their Noah; Sodom and Gomorrah their Lot; Egypt had her Joseph; the children of Israel, while in the wilderness, had Moses; the Jews were blessed with the prophets and apostles; and even the midnight gloom of human history in the middle ages, had its sunny spots of moral character. With equal delight we may contemplate the great and good men of Poland, as found in the characters of Nicholas Copernicus, John Sobieski, and Thaddeus Kosciusko, whose names have come down to us, as three of the greatest and best men of their age. To say nothing of numerous other great men of Poland, the world is under lasting obligations to unfortunate Sarmatia, for benefiting and adorning the human family, with these three distinguished men.

In order to form a true estimate of great men, and describe them with justice and profit, we must view them at all points, and in all their different phases, as we would the ancient and sublime pyramids of Egypt. They have their dark, bright, distant, and near views; as well as their real and looming points of vision. And as we walk around these towering monuments of human greatness, every step presents to our wondering view new objects of admiration, fresh beauties, and sublimities. The picture of a great man's character, like the immortal paintings of Dubuffe, never ceases to please, never fails to interest; and the more we examine the canvas of this eminent French artist, in his pictures of Adam and Eve, the Princess of Capua, Don

Juan, John the Baptist, and the Circassian Slave—which are admitted by all the world to be specimens of the greatest works of the pencil which have ever been produced—the more certain and lasting are our convictions, that they all fail in comparison with the moral picture of a great man's talents, drawn out in living characteristics, by the Great Master of all arts in his providence; where the scintillations of genius, the beautiful tints of moral light and shade, relieve the picture from the canvas, and present the whole moral character in such beautiful and symmetrical form, as will not fail to give us a full view of all the intellectual, moral, and physical powers of the truly great man.

In all our estimates of great men, we must take them as we find them—as they really are, and not what they should be. It would be the height of human folly to attempt any alterations in the beauty of the violet, the strength of the oak, the colors of the rainbow, the brilliancy of lightning, or the majesty of thunder. So in describing a great man, we must hold him up to view in his original character, as he has formed it, remembering,

> "There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
> Rough-hew them how we will."

Human greatness has four general features: Intellectual greatness, moral greatness, physical greatness, and active greatness. When all these general characteristics are harmoniously and symmetrically united, they form a truly great man in every sense of the word. Washington possessed all these in an eminent degree. Napoleon possessed intellectual, physical, and active greatness; but he was sadly deficient in moral excellence. Bonaparte's intellectual powers, his physical powers, and great ability of endurance, with his unparalleled activity in executing

his mighty and far-seeing plans, were never surpassed by a human being; but his morals and religion were a sad compound of corruption and reckless ambition. Washington's great and good mind could plan the operations of a battle-field, or the more weighty affairs of state, with equal success; his physical strength was gigantic—his activity as quick as thought; and amid all this greatness, and all this weight of human responsibility, he could meekly and reverently bow his knees under the shade of a forest tree, while a mark for the Indian's rifle, on the eve of battle, and invoke the blessing of Heaven for the success of his arms, and the freedom of his country. In addition to all this, we find great modesty, simplicity, wisdom, self-control, spotless integrity, frugality, industry, untiring perseverance, pure morality, and saving piety, as in the character of Martin Luther —the invariable and prevailing characteristics of great and good men. The two leading features of all great men, are discovery and demonstration. But few possess them both. It is one thing to discover and another to demonstrate, explain, and reduce to practice.

There are other considerations worthy of notice in the history of great men: First, the peculiar times in which they live; second, the peculiar duties they have to perform; third, the means they enjoy for the accomplishment of their arduous labors; and, fourth, their comparative success.

There always seems to be a providential adaptation of great men to their times and place. There never was a period in the history of religion, when Martin Luther could have done his great work, except his own peculiar life and times. That a modest, retiring, unknown, untitled, poor boy, should rise up, just as the darkness of the middle ages was retiring before the

dawning rays of the fifteenth century—that this youthful monk, battling and cutting his way through the opposition of his parents, his friends, his associates and superiors—without weapons, without aid, without any other means than moral excellence, moral truth, and the aid of Heaven; and under all these discouraging embarrassments, should conquer kings, nations, and continents, and finally the whole world, are themes of the moral sublime, seldom found in the annals of literature.

Every great man has his time and place. To say why a great man makes his appearance at a certain time and place, possessing powers adapted to his times, which no other person ever had, and how the great works of progression and reform are accomplished by him, are questions beyond our power to answer; yet, such is the fact, and we must take it as we find it. The great man always finds his country in want of him, and his work is ready for his hands. His labors are of two kinds: First, to understand his work; and, second, to perform it. It is necessary, first, to understand the wants of his day, and its real present exigencies, and what society really needs to enable it to subsist and attain its natural development. He understands these wants better than any other person of his time, and knows better than any other how to control the powers of society, and direct them successfully towards the accomplishment of his proposed end. Hence, the great man, as soon as he appears, and makes known his superior knowledge and skill, is readily understood, accepted, followed, and honored; and all lend him their aid in accomplishing the great mission for which he is sent. After obtaining the knowledge of his work, he next advances fearlessly and courageously to its accomplishment.

The means which a great man has at his command for accomplishing his labor, form the best test of his superior ability. Napoleon was the most successful man in the world, so long as he had in his hands the sword and the purse, with all the soldiery and wealth of France at his command, and was at the head of all things in both Church and State. His distinguished antagonist, Lord Wellington, was the creature and pensioner of his government, without a soldier or a dollar, except what he invoked from his sovereign. Bonaparte had all the means at his own disposal, and had no favors to ask of any prince. And a still greater disparagement of means is found in running a parallel between Washington and Bonaparte; and the comparison reflects the greatest honor on the American hero who triumphed with such limited means.

After all, it is *success* that principally characterizes a great man. Success, in a great and good cause, as in the case of Washington, who liberated his country from the tyranny of their oppressors, in a defensive war, with very limited means, is entitled to vastly more applause than the success of Napoleon, with all the resources of his country at his own control, in the bloody and disgraceful work of aggressive war, for his personal aggrandizement.

Section II.

COPERNICUS.

These general principles are not without their application to the great men of Poland, and particularly to Copernicus, Sobieski, and Kosciusko. Nicholas Copernicus, the celebrated astronomer and discoverer of the true solar system, was born

near the old gate of Thorn, in Poland, on the Vistula, February 19th, 1473, where his father had become a citizen ten years previous. It is supposed that his family came originally from Westphalia. His father was a surgeon in Thorn, and his mother was sister to Lucas Walzeiradt, the bishop of Ermeland, a distinguished office, to which he was raised a few years after the birth of Copernicus, and who afterwards became the distinguished patron and friend of the great astronomer.

Copernicus received the rudiments of his education at a school in his native city, where he early distinguished himself from his youthful schoolmates, by a precocious development of many of those superior intellectual, moral, physical, and active powers which subsequently gave him immortal fame. His worthy and eminent uncle, the bishop of Ermeland, in the early childhood of his distinguished nephew, discovering, as he supposed, and as the sequel proved, the precocious germs of a very high order of talent, caused him to be removed from the normal school of his native city, to the university of Cracow, where he commenced the study of physic, with a view of pursuing the profession of his father; and there received the degree of Doctor of Medicine. During his medical studies, he was constantly engaged in mathematical investigations, and in the study of perspective, and practice of painting. He attended the mathematical lectures of Albert Brudzewski, which inspired his ardor for astronomical studies, until his literary aspirations led him to emulate Peurbach and Regiomontanus, two of the most celebrated mathematicians of his day. With this view he went to Italy at the age of twenty-three, where the arts and sciences were beginning to flourish, after the fall of the Byzantine empire, and received lessons in astronomy from the celebrated

Dominic Maria, of Ferrano, professor of mathematics at Bologna, who immediately discovered the superior talents of his pupil. Here Copernicus, by his masterly genius, soon formed with his distinguished master the triple relations of pupil, friend, and fellow; and there is reason to believe that Maria's hypothesis of the variability of the axis of the globe, suggested to Copernicus the idea of explaining the celestial phenomena by the motion of the earth.

In 1497, Copernicus first observed the occultation of Aldebaran by the moon. From Bologna, Copernicus went to Rome in 1500, where he employed himself in teaching mathematics by the side of Regiomontanus, and in making astronomical observations. The eminent talents of Copernicus had now secured him the respect and confidence of the principal learned men of his age, and the cordial friendship of all who knew him. From Rome he returned to his own country, where his uncle, the bishop of Ermeland, made him canon in the cathedral of Frauenburg; and the inhabitants of his native town had nominated him archdeacon of the Church of St. John. He had now attained such eminence for scientific knowledge, that, in 1516, after his return to the place of his nativity, he was consulted by the clergy of Rome respecting the proposed reformation of the calendar. In 1521, he was sent by the chapter to the diet of Graudentz; one of the principal objects of which, was, to reconcile the difficulties growing out of the irregular coining of money. Here he proposed a plan for establishing a general mint at the public expense; but the mutability, selfishness, jealousy, and ignorance of the nobility, defeated this, and all other wise plans of national improvement.

His principal residence was at Frauenburg, and in this sequestered retreat, he devoted himself with renewed zeal to the duties

of his office and the study of astronomy. The house which he inhabited, as one of the sixteen canons, was romantically situated on the brow of a mountain, commanding a most extensive view of the heavens, and afforded him the greatest facilities, in the absence of the telescope,—which had not yet been invented,—for astronomical observations.

Among the many hypotheses, with regard to our planetary system, which had been advanced during the two thousand years previous to the fifteenth century, one had prevailed and obtained universal credence, founded in the most ingenious, artificial, and wonderful mixture of wisdom and folly which the human mind has ever encountered. Pythagoras, Aristotle, Plato, Hipparchus, Archimedes, and others, had adopted the solar system of Ptolemy; which formed the prevailing astronomy of the age, and fixed the immobility of the earth in the centre of the system, with all the planetary world revolving around it.*

Copernicus, after years of daily reflections and observations of the heavenly bodies, brought all his herculean powers to bear in one focus of patient, uninterrupted thought, on this erroneous system. He doubted whether the motions of the heavenly bodies could be so confused and complicated as this hypothesis would make them, well knowing as he did, and as all his scientific investigations had taught him, that nature ever follows the most simple laws, although these laws, to the ignorant, may assume, at times, complicated appearances. He now commenced a universal and minute survey of all the oriental and contemporary learning on this subject. He found, in the writings of the ancients, that Nicetas, Heraclides, and Ecphontus had suggested the *possibility* of a motion of the earth; and this induced him to extend his

* American Encyclopædia, III., 518.

researches. It is due to Copernicus to say, that the hypothesis of Aristarchus of Samos,—that the earth revolves in an oblique circle around the sun, and also revolves daily on its own axis,—could not have been seen by him previous to his discovery and demonstration of the true solar system, for the reason that it is found in no work previous to his time, except the Arenario of Archimedes, which was first printed at Venice at a much later period.

The old system, independently of its coincidence with vulgar observation, received great support from the authority of Scriptures, as they were erroneously explained by the ecclesiastics of that age; and received no small support from the still more imposing sanction of Plato and Aristotle. Hence, it required a moral courage almost supernatural, to assail and explode the doctrine of Ptolemy, and establish the new system, against the prejudices of the age, in the twilight which intervened between the close of the middle ages and the morning of the fifteenth century, —the dawn of modern science. The attention of Copernicus was particularly drawn to the disorder and confusion which prevailed in the Ptolemaic system, and the absurdity of supposing the planets to revolve uniformly around a centre different from the centre of their orbits. With the view of defending himself by argument and authority, as well as he could, he extended his inquiries into the true system by an historical examination of the various opinions of ancient authors. The opinions of the ancient Egyptians, of Pythagoras, of Philolaus, Aristarchus, Apollonius, Pergaeus, Nicetor, Heraclides, and Martianus Capello, all countenanced the general notion which he had formed. But it seems he gave particular attention to the system of Martianus Capello, a Roman author of the fifth century, who placed the sun between

Mars and the moon, and made Mercury and Venus revolve around him as their proper centre. Nor did he overlook the more complete hypothesis of Apolloneus Pergaeus, who made the superior as well as the inferior planets revolve around the sun, while the sun and moon revolved around the earth in the centre of the world.

Guided by these opinions, and by the general principles which he had early entertained, respecting the simplicity and harmony of the system, Copernicus was gradually led to the conclusion that the sun was the immovable centre of the universe, and the earth was a planet like Mars and Venus, and that all the planets revolve around the sun in the following order: Mercury, in eighty-seven days; Venus, in two hundred and twenty-four; the Earth, in three hundred and sixty-five; Mars, in one year and three hundred and twenty-one days; Jupiter, in eleven years; and Saturn in twenty-nine years. At a subsequent period, when he described their paths, he found that these circles, notwithstanding their great simplicity, fully explained all the motions of the heavenly bodies, and that the apparent stations and retrogradations of the planets necessarily resulted from the motion of the earth. And thus was discovered the true system of the universe by this immortal son of unfortunate Poland.

After completing this beautiful and sublime system, which he had commenced about the year 1507, he resolved to demonstrate and establish it by the evidence of actual observation. In order to accomplish this, he determined to make a series of observations upon all the planets, and to construct tables of their motions, more correct and extensive than those of Ptolemy, or the Alphonsin tables. He accordingly constructed a quadrant with movable radii—like that of Ptolemy—and also a parallactic

instrument, which had a large radius, divided into 1414 parts, in order to form the hypothenuse of a right-angled triangle, whose sides were four feet long, and divided into 1000 parts. This instrument was afterwards presented by Hounof, canon of Ermeland, to Tycho-Brahei, who set a great value upon it. With the aid of these instruments, Copernicus made an immense number of observations, which were published with those of Tycho, in 1666; and by means of which he computed his new tables of the planets, and brought to a conclusion, in 1530, his great work on the revolutions of the heavenly bodies.

Copernicus was aware of the ignorance and prejudices of his times; and fearing to alarm the public mind by his new and astounding discoveries, he declined to publish his works, and resisted the most earnest solicitations of his friends. The Cardinal Nicolas Schonburg, bishop of Capua, wrote to Copernicus in 1534, requesting him to publish his new system; and Tydemon Gyse, bishop of Culm, who appears to have been formerly one of the canons of Frauenburg, made a similar solicitation, in the most urgent manner. In the year 1539, George Joac Rheticus, who was professor of mathematics at Wittenburg, resigned his chair in that university, and repaired to Frauenburg for the purpose of making himself master of the discoveries of Copernicus; where they arranged a plan of laying them before the world, without causing any violent excitement to the public mind by their novelty. In order to prepare the public mind for the new works of Copernicus, Rheticus published in the year 1540, without any name, and under the disguise of a student of mathematics, a general account of the new system. This publication was received by the public without any tokens of disapprobation; and Rheticus was encouraged to go a step farther, and publish a second

edition of it at Basle, in 1541, with his own name. During the same year the discoveries of Copernicus were noticed in the most flattering terms by Erasmus Rheinbald, in a work which he published at Wittenburg, in which he speaks of a second Ptolemy being wanted, to restore the degenerate science of the age; and, alluding to Copernicus, he expresses a hope that such a person would be found in Prussia, formerly Poland, whose divine genius would be duly appreciated by posterity. Encouraged by the success of these publications, Copernicus at last consented to place his own work in the hands of Rheticus, which was published at Nuremburg in 1543, at the expense of Cardinal Schonburg.

Copernicus, fortunately for himself and for the world, which have enjoyed the fruits of his labors, had passed quietly through a long, useful, and happy life without persecution. But notwithstanding the purity of his character, the greatness of his genius, the benevolence of his heart, and the liberality of his charity, he unfortunately and undeservedly closed his long career of usefulness in sorrow. Both the astronomer and his friends had wisely anticipated the degraded opposition, which the bigoted and ignorant Catholic schools might raise against his new astronomical revelations, and, therefore, had taken all the precautions in their power to disarm prejudice; but all to no purpose. The green-eyed monster, calumny, though he had slumbered so long, that the friends of humanity fondly hoped the good old man would be permitted to go down to the grave in peace; yet the day at last dawned, when fell revenge was to strike its poisonous fangs into the heart, which heretofore had been a stranger to hatred, and had ever been the abode of love to God and man. It seems to be the invariable lot of man in this vale of tears, to be compelled to pass through the fiery ordeal of persecution at some

period of his life; and the certainty of this deplorable event, and the severity of its trials, generally increase in proportion to the moral excellence of the worthy victim to be sacrificed. But fortunately for the patient sufferers, the Christian religion has made most ample provisions for this very contingency; and surrounds those who are persecuted for their righteous devotion to truth and virtue, with all the consolations of piety, and the hopes of a glorious immortality.

A merciful Providence had wisely chained the evil genius of malice from assailing Copernicus, until the month of May, 1543. It was a calm, clear, beautiful night, in that most lovely of all months in the year, when the twinkling stars shone brightly in the heavens, and their angelic inhabitants were gazing with intense interest on this little, dark, earthly ball, as it so carelessly floated through infinite space—revealing on its surface the little town of Wernica, a canonry of Prussian Poland, and the last home of Copernicus. There, in that sequestered retreat, in the cold regions of the northern wilderness of Europe, far removed from the luxuries and refinements of Grecian and Roman civilization, where all the inhabitants of this heretofore quiet town slumbered in the silence of night—save one man, who anxiously watched alone in his solitary chamber at the summit of a lofty tower. The only furniture of this secluded apartment consisted of an old table, a few books, well soiled with hard study, and an old iron lamp, a relic of by-gone years. Its only occupant was an old man of about seventy, clothed in a very ordinary, but comfortable garb, bowed down by years of literary labor and anxious toil, with his brow furrowed by profound and perplexing thought; while the fire of genius kindled in his eye, and his noble countenance beamed with gentleness, kindness, benevolence,

intelligence, humility, meekness, and every grace which adorns a human being, fitted for the skies. His soft white hair, parting on his broad, high, intellectual forehead, fell gracefully over his shoulders in waving locks; while his venerable, well proportioned, and manly person was covered with the ecclesiastical costume of the age and country in which he lived; clothed in a long straight robe, with a fur collar, and double sleeves, which were lined with fur as far as the elbow. This old man was the immortal astronomer, Copernicus, doctor of philosophy, of divinity, and of medicine; titular canon of Wernica, honorary professor of Bologna, Rome, &c., and finally, the idol of the wise and the good of all ages. He had but just completed his great work "on the Revolution of the Heavenly Bodies"—in which he had revealed the heavens to the earth—in the midst of poverty, ridicule, and toil, with no other aid than that of his own modest and superior genius, without any philosophical apparatus or instrument, save a triangle of wood of his own manufacture. The astronomer was now approaching that interesting crisis in his career, when he was about to establish on a firm basis, his immortal discoveries, which were destined to change the whole world of astronomical science, and supersede all the favorite theories of his predecessors and jealous contemporaries.

On that interesting and cruel day, the venerable canon of Wernica had received the last proof sheets of his work, which his devoted disciple Rheticus was then publishing at Nuremberg; the principles of which he wished to verify by fresh observations and experiments, before returning these final proofs to the press. Accordingly he retired to his observatory and passed the whole night, which Heaven seemed to prepare for the astronomical purpose. As soon as his far-seeing eye—the only teles-

cope of the day—saw the pale stars faintly gleaming in the far blue distance of the eastern sky—he took his triangular instrument, which he had constructed with his own slender hand, out of three pieces of wood—and for the last time on earth, directed it successively towards the four cardinal points of the horizon. These final experiments removed from his clear, comprehensive mind, every lingering shadow of doubt; and the good old man, at once overpowered by the conviction that he had been made the humble instrument in the hands of his Maker, of unveiling the worlds above to the inhabitants of this limited globe, humbly bowed his aged frame on his trembling knees, in the presence of that Supreme Being who had created those heavenly bodies, and subjected them to those immutable laws, which He had inspired His humble servant to reveal; and calmly folding his attenuated, innocent hands, across his devout bosom, thanked his God for these miraculous revelations. He then returned to the table, and, seizing a pen, with a tremulous hand, wrote on the title-page of his book:—"Behold the work of the greatest and the most perfect artizan: the work of God himself."

After the excitement of the moment had passed away, he proceeded with his usual equanimity, to write the dedication of his book in these works:—

"To the Most Holy Father, Pope Paul III.; I dedicate my work to your holiness, in order that all the world, whether learned or ignorant, may see that I do not seek to shun examination and the judgment of my superiors. Your authority, and your love of science in general, and for mathematics in particular, will serve to shield me against wicked and malicious slanderers, not-

withstanding the proverb, which says, there is no remedy against the wounds inflicted by the tongue of calumny, &c.

"NICHOLAS COPERNICUS,

"Of Thorn."

As the close of this eventful evening slowly ushered in the dawning day, while the glimmering lamp of the philosopher burned more dimly in its socket, he leaned his pale forehead upon the aged table, and overcome by fatigue, sank into a sweet, refreshing slumber. But his sleep, so necessary to a constitution exhausted and shattered by sixty years of severe and distracting intellectual labor, was of short duration; and his repose was soon interrupted by the entrance of an aged and favorite servant, who now entered the room, and gently touching the slumbering canon upon the shoulder, mildly, but earnestly said, "Master, the messenger, who arrived yesterday from Rheticus is ready to set out on his return, and is only waiting for your proof sheets and letters." The wise man rose, sealed up the precious packet, and then sank back upon his chair, as if wearied by the effort. "But this is not all," continued the faithful servant; "there are ten poor sick people in the house, waiting for you; and besides, you are wanted at Frauenberg, to look after the water-machine, which has stopped working; and also to see the three workmen who have broken their legs in trying to set it agoing again." "Poor creatures," exclaimed Copernicus. "Let my horse be saddled directly." Rousing all his energies, and with a heroic resolution, shaking off the refreshing sleep, which had weighed down his eyelids, the astronomer immediately descended the time-worn stairs of the old tower, and hastened to the relief of the poor sufferers.

The residence of Copernicus, which was one of the most unpretending in Wernica, consisted of a laboratory, in which he prepared his gratuitous medicine for the poor; a small studio in which this distinguished genius, learned in both art and science, painted his own likeness, or those of his particular friends, or traced his recollections of Rome and Bologna; containing also a small parlor on the ground-floor, which was continually open to all who came to him for medicine, for money, for food, or for literary and religious instruction. Over the door of this humble house, an oval aperture had been cut, through which the rays of the mid-day sun daily shone, and resting upon a certain point in the adjoining room, marked the hour of noon. This was the astronomical gnomon of the Polish astronomer; and the only ornament which adorned the room, was some poetry, written by his own hand, and pasted up over the chimney-piece. In this humble, but ever memorable parlor, where the great and good of all nations delight to pay their reverence to the memory of Copernicus, the venerable canon found the ten invalids who had come to ask his charity and medical advice. In this hospital, with his usual kindness to the poor and distressed, he dressed the wounds of some, administered remedies to others, while on the whole he bestowed alms, with pious consolations and benedictions.

Having thus completed his labors of love, he hastily refreshed his almost exhausted frame, by his simple, but philosophical repast, which consisted of a draught of new milk, and was preparing to set out for Frauenberg, when to his great surprise a horseman, galloping up to the door, on his foaming steed, handed him a letter. The old man trembled as he recognized the autograph of his friend Gysius, bishop of Culm. The letter read thus:— "May God have pity on us, and avert the blow which threatens

thee ! Thy enemies, and thy rivals combined—those who accuse thee of folly, and those who treat thee as a heretic—have been so successful in exciting against thee the minds of the people of Nuremberg, that men curse thy name in the streets; the priests excommunicate thee from their pulpits; and the university, hearing that thy book was about to appear, has declared its intention to break the printing presses of the publisher, and to destroy the work, to which thy life has been devoted. Come lay the storm; but come quickly, or thou wilt be too late." This news was so astounding, the unmerited abuse so unexpected, to the heart which had been innocently and benevolently devoted through life, to the good of his race, and particularly to the interest of his cruel enemies, with whom he had frequently shared his last loaf of bread, so paralyzed Copernicus, that before he had finished the perusal of this ominous letter, he fell back voiceless and powerless in the arms of his faithful old servant, who held him some moments before he recovered. When he again rallied and looked up, the horseman, who had been charged to escort him back, asked him how soon he would wish to set out. The old man replied in a mild and resigned tone, which betokened the Divinity in whom he trusted—"I must set out directly, but not for Nuremberg, or for Culm; the suffering workmen at Frauenberg are expecting me; they may perhaps die if I do not go to their assistance. My enemies may possibly destroy my work—but they cannot stop the stars in their courses !"

Within an hour after, Copernicus was at Frauenberg in the active discharge of his duties at the water-works, which he had constructed for the town on the summit of a hill, whence the waters of Bouda were conveyed to the village, situated at the distance of half a league in the valley below. From this salubrious

fountain, the inhabitants were relieved from their former sufferings, caused by a continual drought, by the simple machinery of turning a valve, through which the pure stream flowed into their houses in great abundance. This hydraulic machine had been deranged on the preceding day, which was the festival of the patron saint of Frauenberg. Copernicus, the moment he examined it, saw at a glance where the difficulty lay, and immediately relieved the machinery, so that in a few hours the water again flowed freely into the town below, similar to the hydraulic works of Philadelphia and New York. His first cares had been bestowed on the unhappy sufferers who had been seriously injured while working in the sluices, where he had occasion to use his surgical and medical skill, in setting their broken limbs and binding up their wounds; and, after committing them to the care of an attendant, he promised to visit them the next day. But Heaven had otherwise ordered; although the worthy doctor little anticipated the dreadful blow, which was about to descend and lay him low in his grave.

As he crossed the square, while passing through the town on his return home, he saw amidst a riotous, noisy crowd, a company of strolling players, acting upon a temporary stage. This mock-theatre represented an astronomical observatory, filled with all sorts of ridiculous instruments—in the midst of which stood an old man, whose dress and bearing were in exact imitation of Copernicus. The resemblance was so striking, that he readily recognised himself, and paused, almost paralyzed with astonishment. Behind the merry-Andrew, whose degraded business it was thus to hold up the great astronomer to public derision, there stood a personage, whose horns and cloven foot designated him as the representative of Satan, and who caused the pseudo-Coper-

nicus to act and speak, as though he had been an automaton, by means of two strings fastened to his ears—which were asses' ears of considerable dimensions. This disgraceful parody consisted of several successive scenes. In the first act, the astronomer gave himself to Satan, burned a copy of the Bible, and trampled a crucifix under foot; in the second scene he explained his system by juggling, with apples in guise of planets, while his head was transformed into a likeness of the sun by means of torches of resin; in the third representation, he became a charlatan, a vender of pomatum and quack medicines—he spoke dog-Latin to those who happened to pass by; sold them water which he had drawn from his own well, at an exorbitant price, and became intoxicated himself with good wine, which he quaffed in such copious draughts, that he soon disappeared under the table. In the fourth and closing act, he was again dragged before the public, as one accursed of God and man—while the devil, dragging him down to the infernal regions amidst a cloud of sulphurous smoke, announced his intention of punishing him for having caused the earth to turn on its axis, by condemning him to remain with his head downwards throughout eternity. Such is malice and human nature, in its most despicable forms.

When Copernicus saw the invaluable discoveries and labors of his whole life thus held up to the derision and cold contempt of an ignorant, vicious multitude; his ardent and enlightened piety, branded as infidelity; and his pure benevolence, ridiculed as the base quackery of a charlatan, his noble soul was at first utterly overwhelmed, and the most fearful and doubtful forebodings of himself, of mankind, and even of Providence, rushed upon his mind, threatening the most disastrous consequences to himself. At first he hoped that his appearance, his age, and the recollec-

tion of his numerous charities, which he had for fifty years freely bestowed upon the Frauenbergians, would induce them to discontinue their disgraceful scenes. But, at length, to his utter astonishment, he saw his defamers hailed with applause by those whom he had cherished as children, and blessed with so many favors. Under the vigor of youth, he might have endured these severe trials triumphantly; but with his failing strength, worn out by the distracting emotions and fatigue of the preceding night, and by the labors of the morning, which had lacerated his humane and pious feelings, he fell exhausted on the ground. But human nature, always true to itself, and unerringly governed by that sound principle which always causes excessive evil to re-act and correct itself, then, for the first time, struck a chord in the ungrateful hearts of the crazy multitude, as they recognized their stricken and venerable benefactor. The name of Copernicus flew from lip to lip, with electric rapidity and effect, while they heard with tearful eyes and anguished hearts, that the good old man had come that very morning to the town, in order to relieve their distress; and in a moment the current of popular feeling was turned in his favor, their ingratitude was instantly changed to remorse, the crowd immediately dispersed the actors, and anxiously surrounding the expiring astronomer, raised him from the earth. He had only strength left to call for a litter, on which he was conveyed to Wernica in a dying state.

The vital spark of heavenly flame lingered on earth still, for five days of severe trial and painful anxiety, during which it shed its halo of celestial glory around the dying man, as a prelude to quitting its mortal frame. On the day succeeding his visit to Frauenberg, a letter from Rheticus confirmed the previous predictions of the bishop of Culm. Thrice the ignorant, bigoted

students of the university, made an attempt to invade the printing-office, whence the great astronomical truth was about to issue forth, as a new era in science. In the last letter, his friend announced that, "Even this very morning, a set of madmen tried to set fire to it. I have assembled all our friends within the building, and we never quit our posts either day or night, guarding the entrance, and keeping watch over the workmen. The printers perform their work with one hand, while they hold a pistol in the other. If we can stand our ground for two days, thy book is saved; for, let only ten copies be struck off, and nothing will any longer be able to destroy it. But if either to-day or to-morrow our enemies should succeed in gaining the upper hand" .... Rheticus left the sentence unfinished, but Copernicus supplied the want; for he well knew how much depended upon this eventful moment. On the third day, another messenger made his appearance as the bearer of fresh tidings of evil: "A compositor, gained over by our enemies, has delivered into their hands the manuscript of the book, and it has been burned in the public square. Happily, the impression was complete, and we are now putting it into press..... But a popular tumult might yet ruin all!"

Such was the painful anxiety and shameful persecution in which the immortal Copernicus passed the closing scenes of his earthly existence! Life was ebbing fast—the torpor and chill of death had already begun to steal over his once active and powerful faculties—the dying astronomer, the expiring saint, had nearly closed those far-seeing and placid eyes, which had for more than fifty years watched the stars as they rolled through infinite space—that noble heart, which knew no guile, was now giving its last throes to the current of life, when a horseman,

galloping up to the door of that humble and peaceful cottage, and in breathless haste, springing from his trembling steed, hastened into the house of the dying Copernicus, drew from his bosom a volume, whose leaves were still damp with the labor of the press, and placed it in the hands of the expiring author. It was the great work of that truly great man, which had finally issued triumphantly from the press, notwithstanding the fiendish opposition to that book of immortality, which revealed to the world the sublime philosophy and mysterious history of the stars. Stern and unrelenting death, who had already raised his arms, and levelled his fatal arrow, stayed the death-blow for a moment! The last spark of life, so nearly extinguished, seemed to be rekindled in the breast of the dying philosopher; and for the last time, raising his emaciated frame in the bed, he grasped the book with his trembling, attenuated hand, and glanced his expiring eye at its contents. A smile lighted up his calm and submissive features, the precious book fell from his deathly grasp, and clasping his hands together, he exclaimed, in the language of a dying Christian, "Lord, let thy servant now depart in peace!" On uttering these pious words, his soul took its flight with his guardian angels, from the strifes and persecutions of this life, to the quiet and blissful bosom of his God, in that heavenly citadel where the light of the Great Sun of Righteousness shines with light incomparably more resplendent than all the light of the millions of stars, comets, and suns of the whole created universe. It was the morning of the 23d of May, when the day had not yet dawned, while heaven was still lighted up with stars, the earth was redolent with its May-flowers, all nature seemed hushed in awful silence as she sympathized in the death of the great revealer of her laws; and soon the faithful, glorious

sun, rushing up the distant horizon, as if anxious to view the solemn scene which death had made in the slaughter of her favorite, kindly shed his earliest and purest rays upon the still cold brow of the departed saint, sweetly whispering in the ears of the dead, "The king of creation gives thee the kiss of peace, for thou hast been the first to replace him on his throne."

Relentless and venomous persecution followed Copernicus down into his grave. The heaven-daring, earth-blighting court of Rome, replied to his dedication by condemning his book and its principles; but the book was the instrument of its own revenge, and avenged the injuries of its great author, by returning good for evil, and by enlightening the arrogant Roman court, which was, at last, compelled to bow the knee in humble recognition of the faith and genius of the astronomer of Wernica. Prussia, with the ingratitude of an inhuman conqueror, to her everlasting shame be it said, has converted the sacred observatory of Copernicus into a prison of human freedom, and has permitted the ever-memorable house, and the hallowed walks of the former venerable occupant, to crumble in ruins. But Poland has collected some of her last and most sacred charities to raise a monument to the memory of her beloved and world-famed son, at Cracow, and to erect a statue to him in Warsaw.

Copernicus did not live to read his immortal work. He received it only a few hours previous to his death, which happened at Frauenburg, in consequence of the rupture of a blood-vessel, and a palsy in his right side, on the 23d of May, 1543, in the seventy-third year of his age. Several authors have published the life of Copernicus; and Count Sierakowski has erected a monument to his memory, in St. Anne's Church, at Cracow, with this inscription, taken from the Bible: "*Sta, sol, ne mo-*

veare." Thorwaldsen, the greatest sculptor of the age, has executed a colossal statue of Copernicus, for the city of Cracow, which is one of the best specimens of modern art.

We may now pause for a moment over the memory of this great and wonderful man; and, were it possible, the sun, as he courses majestically through the heavens, might obey the injunction of the solemn epitaph, and standing still for a moment in his noonday splendor, gaze upon the tomb of that immortal genius, who has not only revealed to the world the laws of the sun and planetary system, but has caused his influence to be felt in every hamlet, cottage, and palace on the globe, where the light of the sun has penetrated. Copernicus possessed all the qualifications of a truly great man. His most prominent characteristics were the love of truth, benevolence, investigation, caution, prudence, patience, perseverance, forethought, the ability of discovery and demonstration, modesty, and moral excellence. The whole character and life of Copernicus, when compared with the ignorance of the age in which he lived, and the limited means he had at his command, are truly wonderful, and leave him without a superior among all his predecessors, contemporaries, and successors. Copernicus was born for his times. He commenced his labors at a period when he had no authors, no teachers, no instruments, and, single-handed, breasted all the prejudices of the old Ptolemaic system, at the hazard of his life. He conceived the idea of the true planetary system and motion of the heavenly bodies, and pursued it with unwearied industry from the age of twenty to his seventy-third year—a period of fifty-three years—daily comparing his principles with the appearances of the heavens, till, at last, he soared triumphantly above the darkness, ignorance, and preju-

dices of the middle ages, into the clear sunshine of noonday, in the regions of truth and pure science, and finally became the founder of a new system of astronomy, which has stood the test of ages; and what is still more surprising, he did all this a hundred years before the invention of telescopes, with miserable wooden instruments, on which the lines were marked only with ink. What an illustrious example for human ambition to imitate! What great and good enterprise in science, wealth, politics, or morals, cannot almost any man of mediocrity of talents accomplish, who pursues his single object with undivided attention, perseveringly through all opposition, surmounting all obstacles, through a period of fifty-three years!*

Section III.

SOBIESKI.

John Sobieski, or John III., king of Poland, and one of the greatest warriors of the seventeenth century, was born in 1629. His father, James Sobieski, was a man of great distinction in his time, for his literary attainments, his virtues in peace, and his courage in war. He had two sons, Mark and John, whose youthful minds he studiously educated in the principles, virtues, and courage of their father. Although John Sobieski was never one of fortune's favorites, yet he always enjoyed great facilities for self-advancement. He had not, like many, to contend with poverty, the disadvantages of an obscure birth, or a limited education. His immediate ancestry were illustrious, wealthy, and powerful; and he enjoyed from childhood every opportunity that

* Edinburgh Encyclopædia. Art. Copernicus.

Europe could afford, to acquire a liberal education, and the most recent information as regards the arts of war and civil policy; and, at the same time, the cultivation of science and literature. Both his father and grandfather were distinguished in Polish history. The former was castellan of Cracow, the chief secular senator of Poland, and four times marshal of the Diet, under Sigismund III. He was a distinguished general, and illustrious not only in war, but a celebrated author, as his Commentaries of the Chocim War, in Latin, clearly prove. He married the granddaughter of the great Zolkiewski, who defeated the Russians at Moscow, in the reign of Sigismund III., and took the czar prisoner.*

Our hero, John Sobieski, first studied the art of war in France, where he was sent in his youth, accompanied by his elder brother Mark. "My children," said their father, at parting, "apply yourselves in France only to useful arts; as to dancing, you will have an opportunity of accomplishing yourselves in that, among the Tartars." This was during the minority of Louis XIV. The future hero and king of Poland was there enrolled among the *grand musketeers*, a company which had been established by Louis XIII. On leaving France, after finishing their education, the brothers visited England, Italy, and Turkey. On their return to Poland, Casimir was on the throne, and involved in the vexatious war with the Cossacks and Turks. Their father was now dead; but their mother filled his place as the guardian to her sons. After the death of Mark, in an engagement with the Tartars, his mother returned to Italy; whose displeasure John had incurred, by fighting two duels; in the last of which he was wounded, and prevented from being present

* Fletcher, 86.

at the battle of Batowitz, in 1652, where Mark fell. The first of these duels was fought with one of the Pacs, a powerful Lithuanian family, and originated in a dispute at the election of John Casimir. The Pacs were ever after his declared enemies, which caused him to regret, in the coolness of manhood, the impetuosity and faults of his youthful duels. John, while in France, and after his return, was considered by some, as a young debauchee, and a degenerate young nobleman. But he soon silenced all these charges, by correcting his life, and established one of the best and most illustrious characters of his age.

The recent defeat of the Poles at Pilawiecz, was an exciting moment to these young heroes, just as they had returned from their foreign travels, and greatly excited their ambition and courage. Mark fell in a second engagement with the Cossacks, on the banks of the Bog; but his brother John, shielded by Heaven for future greatness, was the fortunate man, and became successively grand marshal and general of the kingdom; and ultimately the greatest and best king of Poland. Filled with courage and flushed with hopes, he exposed himself with the meanest soldier, to the greatest danger, and when urged by his friends and fellow soldiers to take care of himself, he replied—"If I follow your advice, you will despise me." His prowess and military success soon made him the terror of the Tartars and Cossacks—the bitterest enemies of the Poles—and over whom he was constantly gaining new victories. Sobieski, who was famous in the tented field as a general, and in the halls of legislation as a sovereign and politician, who was now both grand-general and grand-marshal—which distinguished offices secured to him almost an absolute power both in civil and military affairs

—began to entertain sanguine hopes of wearing the crown of Poland at no distant day.*

He succeeded in persuading the Poles to reject the foreign royal candidate, and elect a Pole in the person of Michael Koributh Wiecnowiecki, in 1669, a descendant from the Jagellons, although he was not the candidate Sobieski really intended to introduce. The Cossacks, revolting, and being defeated by Sobieski, applied to Turkey for aid. This was an interesting period in the life of Sobieski, who was unfortunately engaged in a secret plot to depose Michael, and set a French prince on the throne. Bnt the approach of this most powerful foe, in the person of Mohammed, suspended these political intrigues, and Sobieski, the great champion of Poland, again took the field.†

In addition to his splendid talents and moral worth, Sobieski availed himself of other means to distinction and power; and by his marriage with Marie de la Grange, one of the maids of honor to the wife of Casimir, greatly strengthened his influence at court. She was the widow of Zamoyski, palatine of Landomir, and daughter of the Marquis d'Anquien, and a confident of her mistress. She was a lady of great beauty and talent. It was agreed by Casimir, as conditions of the marriage, to give Sobieski valuable offices, and that of grand-general, and was ultimately the cause of his being made king.‡

Sobieski in vain attempted to rally his little army against this powerful invading foe; and, notwithstanding all his heroic efforts, Kamieniec, a strong town and fortress in Podolia, and the only strong fortification of the Poles, fell into the hands of the Turks on the 27th of August, 1672; and in September following, Mohammed encamped under the walls of Leopol, the capital of

* American Encyclopædia, VII., 232. † Fletcher, 82. ‡ Fletcher, 87.

Gallicia. The tardy pospolite, whom Michael had hastily assembled, imagining that the aristocrats were treacherously concerned in this invasion, assembled at Golembe to protect their king. The feeble and cowardly Michael, trembling at the near approach of the Moslem hordes, made proposals of peace to the Sultan, which were readily accepted. This disgraceful treaty of Buczacz, lost Poland the Ukraine and Podolia, and made Michael a tributary vassal of Mohammed for twenty-two thousand ducats annually. The Turk, pleased with this success, and fearing the awful reckoning which he might have to make with Sobieski, who was continually harassing him, withdrew his troops.

The aristocratical nobility protested vehemently against this treaty, and complained long and loud of the breach of privilege committed by the king in signing it without the consent of the Diet, although they were the very individuals who had recently planned the abolition of the elective monarchy. The confederates firmly and vigorously defended the treaty; and so violent were these party strifes and malevolent feelings, that they condemned a hundred of the most distinguished nobles to death, and required all the others to subscribe to the confederacy under the same penalty. And so furious were the dominant party, that they summoned Sobieski to appear before them, to answer their charges of treason. It was with great difficulty the general could save the messengers from the vengeance of his soldiers, who swore unanimously to defend their brave hero. The approach of winter dispersed the confederacies, and, in the beginning of 1673, all parties agreed to a meeting, for the purpose of reconciling their political quarrels.

At the opening of the assembly, one of Sobieski's calumniators—an obscure, base, and perjured wretch—instigated by

others still more fiendish, announced he had the important message to deliver that Sobieski had sold his country to the Sultan for twelve millions. On hearing this vile slander, hundreds of voices immediately demanded vengeance on the vile creature, who dared thus to calumniate their great general, who hastened in person to Warsaw to defend himself. His entrance into the city was a triumph; and the king, his greatest enemy, was compelled to honor him, amid the applause of thousands, who made the heavens ring with their shouts of praise, in honor of the brave hero who had so frequently defended them from the sabres of the Turks, by baring his own bosom to their weapons of death. By his advice, the assembly dissolved into a regular Diet; and his violent enemies now bowed before him with reverence and fear. The false accuser was condemned to capital punishment; but Sobieski's influence and clemency arrested the sentence; and the Diet declared war.

Although Michael, nominally, wore the crown, yet Sobieski wielded the sword and sceptre. The Turks again returned to claim their tribute money, which had not been paid; and Sobieski again buckled on his armor to meet them, and pay their principal and interest with steel and bullets.

One of the most glorious victories ever won by John Sobieski, and second only to that of Vienna, was the battle of Chocim, which occurred November 11th, 1673. Chocim was a strong castle, situated about four leagues from Kamaniek, on a rocky projection which runs into the Dnieper, impregnable from the rear, and surrounded on the other side by deep and rocky ravines. A bridge thrown over one of them united it to the entrenched camp, where Hussein Pacha had posted his army. That camp, defended by ancient field-works, extended along the

banks of the Dnieper, and was guarded on the side of Moldavia, the only accessible quarter, by precipices cut in the solid rock, and by impassable morasses. The art of the Ottomans had greatly increased the natural strength of the position; the plain, after the example of the Romans, was intersected to a great distance by canals and ditches, whose banks were strengthened by palisades. A powerful artillery defended all the avenues to the camp; and there reposed under magnificent tents the Turkish generalissimo and eighty thousand veterans, when they were suddenly roused from their slumbers by the sight of the Polish banners proudly floating in the distance, and steadily advancing to the fight, who moved in splendid array round their entrenchments, and took up a position almost under the fire of their artillery. The fatal battle-ground filled the recollections of the Christian host with thoughts of thrilling interest. Fifty years before, James Sobieski, the heroic father of the still more heroic son, John Sobieski, had measured sabres with the Turk, and won a lasting fame by conquering a glorious peace under the walls of that very castle; and against whose ramparts, after the disasters of the Kobilta, the power of the young Sultan Osman dashed itself in vain. But the sides of the combatants were now changed. The Turks held the entrenched camp, and the army of the Polish hero filled the plain—a momentous odds against the Christian force.*

The smaller force had now to make the assault. The larger army was entrenched behind ramparts better fortified, better armed with cannon, than those which Sultan Osman and his three hundred thousand Mussulmen sought in vain to wrest from the feeble army of Wladislas many years previous. The infidel

* Salvandy, II., 165.

Turks had grown grey in victories, calloused with the scars of former triumphs, while the Polish assailants were young troops, for the most part ill armed, and mustered in haste, without resources, magazines, or provisions, and worn out with the fatigues and privations of a winter campaign. Deep ditches, the rocky bed of torrents, and precipitous walls of rock, composed the field of battle on which they were called to combat an enemy, reposing tranquilly under the laurels of former victories, beneath sumptuous tents, and behind ramparts defended by an array of three hundred pieces of cannon. The awful night passed on in solemn stillness from watch to watch, in mortal disquietude with the Polish army; while the mind of the general, equally with the soldiers, was overwhelmed with painful anxiety. The enterprise which he had undertaken seemed above human strength; the army had no chance of safety but in victory; and there was too much reason to fear that treachery or division in his own troops would snatch it from his grasp, and hand down his name with disgrace to posterity.

Sobieski alone was inaccessible to fear. He had now to fight three battles in one. His foes of the past, the present, and the future, with all their interests and revenge, were arrayed before the hero of Chocim. He was now about to fight the battles of his ancestors over again, defend his country, and win a crown. The auspicious morn again dawned on the Christian camp, and breathed its chilly breeze through their anxious ranks. When the troops were drawn up on the following rising sun, the grand hetman of Lithuania, with fear and trembling, approaching Sobieski, declared the attack a hopeless and reckless undertaking, and his resolution to retreat. "Retreat," cried the Polish hero, "is impossible. We should only find a disgraceful death in the

morasses with which we are surrounded a few leagues from hence; better far to brave it at the foot of the enemy's entrenchments. But what ground is there for apprehension? Nothing disquiets me but what I hear from you. *Your* menaces are our only danger. I am confident you will not execute them. If Poland is to be effaced from the book of nations, you will not allow our children to exclaim, that if a Paz had not fled they would not have wanted a country." Vanquished by the eloquence and magnanimity of Sobieski, and the cries of Sapieha and Radziwie, the Lithuanian chief promised to stand by his guns, and not desert his countrymen.

Sobieski then ranged his Spartan battalions in order of battle, and the Turks made preparations to receive behind their entrenchments the attack of the Christian forces; which to the Sultan appeared both hopeless and ridiculous. Their forces were ranged in a semi-circle, and their forty field-pieces advanced in front, battered down the obstacles which were placed across the approaches to the Turkish palisades. Kouski, the commander of the artillery, encountering the superior fire of the enemy, distinguished himself by prodigies of valor until in the evening, when the breaches were declared passable. Soon after the darkness of night had thrown its sable mantle over the anxious and weary combatants, the Christian forces of the two principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia deserted the crescent and camp of the infidels, to fight under the banners of the cross; a cheering omen for the faltering Poles. Heaven, whose tenderness kindly tempers the wind to the shorn lamb, now vouchsafed his propitious smiles, by palsying the activity of the Turks with a severe climate, which, while it chilled the warm blood of the Asiatic troops, only invigorated the phlegmatic Poles to bolder deeds of

daring. The weather was dreadful; the snow fell almost in avalanches, until the ranks were obstructed by its drifts. While this severe tempest of snow and hail was raging and whirling in the faces of the combatants, Sobieski wisely kept his troops under arms the whole night. The next morning revealed the attacks of the angry elements, and found the forces principally buried in the snow, exhausted by cold and suffering. Sobieski, availing himself of the philosophy of the tempest, and turning his suppliant eyes to Heaven for Divine aid, while the brave spirits of his ancestors and sire were hovering over the field, as he imagined, summoned all his energies, and gave the signal of attack. Sobieski, mounting his noble charger, who proudly dashed through the lines, caparisoned with snow and ice, bearing his heroic rider, with his clothes, his hair, and his moustaches, covered with frost, and tasselled with icicles, exclaimed: "Companions, I deliver to you an enemy already half vanquished. You have suffered, but the Turks are exhausted. The troops of Asia can never endure the hardships of the last twenty-four hours. The cold has conquered them to our hand. Whole troops of them are already sinking under their sufferings; while we, inured to the climate, are only animated by it to fresh exertions. It is for us to save the republic from shame and slavery. Soldiers of Poland, recollect that you fight for your country, and that Jesus Christ combats for you."

The devout Sobieski had already thrice heard mass since the rising sun. The day was the *fête* of St. Martin of Tours. The generals entertained great hopes from his pious intercessions; while the priests, who had followed their masters to the field of battle, traversed the ranks, recounting the actions of that great apostle of the French, and the numerous blessings they might

expect from his personal influence and his intimacy with Heaven. Fortunately he was a Sclavonian by birth, and with all these favorable omens there could be no doubt he would work miracles in their favor, until the success of the Christian army should be complete. The priests then closed their pathetic orations with the touching peroration, as they with one hand pointed to the skies, where the spirits of their ancestors were gazing upon them with intense anxiety, and with the other to the hills, where the white eagles were perched on every peak, watching the moment of victory, when they would exultingly soar through the heavens with the joyful news that Poland was free.

An accidental circumstance, which to the credulous, superstitious Poles, "was proof more strong than Holy Writ," gave the highest appearance of truth to these ideas of the ecclesiastics. The grand marshal, who had just completed his last reconnoissance of the enemy's camp, returned with his countenance illuminated by the anticipations of victory, as they beheld the immense and gorgeous camp of the enemy; and by his musical voice roused his troops with the following eloquent speech: "My companions," he exclaimed, "in half an hour we shall be lodged under those gilded tents;" and these prophetic words proved true. He had but recently discovered that the point against which he intended to direct his principal attack was not defended but by a few troops, benumbed with cold. He immediately made several feigned assaults to divert the attention of the enemy from the real point of attack, and directed against the palisades, by which he intended to enter, the fire of his battery. The soldiers immediately recollected that on the preceding evening they had made the utmost efforts to draw the cannon beyond that point, but that a power, apparently more than human, had chained them

to the spot, from whence now they easily beat down all obstacles to the advancing army, and cleared the road to victory; another instance of the miraculous intervention of Gregory of Tours, as the Poles believed! The awful moment for the death charge now arrives! The Christian army knelt down to receive the benediction of Father Pizeborowski, confessor of the grand hetman. The devotions of the man of God being concluded, the lion-hearted Sobieski dismounted from his prancing charger, and ordered his infantry to move forward to the assault of the newly-opened breach in the palisades; while the hero himself, sword in hand, lead his Spartan band, with the armed valets following rapidly in their footsteps. That courageous band never feared to tread the path of danger and death in the hopes of plunder.

In a moment the ditches were filled up and passed; and the troops arrived at the foot of the rocks with the bound of tigers. The faltering grand hetman, after the first leap of success, had hardly time to remount his horse, when to his great surprise he saw on the heights of the entrenched camp the standard of the cross and the eagle of Poland. Petrikowski and Denhoff, of the royal race of the Piasts, more than rivalling the prowess of their illustrious ancestors, had first mounted the ramparts, and raised their ensigns. At this joyful and unexpected sight, a hurrah of triumph rose from the Polish ranks, and resounded through the heavens for miles; while the Turks, seized with consternation, were confounded at the sudden attack, made at a moment when they vainly imagined the severity of the weather had deterred the Christians from their perilous enterprise. At this critical juncture, Hussein, deceived by a false attack of Czarnicki,

rushed with his cavalry to the other side of the camp, and the spahis supposing that he was retreating, speedily took to flight.

But the Janizzaries, who were not so easily conquered, remained unvanquished. Long inured to arms, they rapidly re-formed their ranks, and falling upon the valets, who supposing the battle already won, had dispersed in search of plunder, easily put them to the sword. Fortunately, however, Sobieski had employed his foot soldiers in levelling the ground, and rendering accessible the approaches to the summits of the hills. Immediately the Polish cavalry came rushing in with a noise like thunder. The invincible hussars and cuirassiers, with blazing torches affixed to their lances, scaled precipices which seemed hardly accessible to foot soldiers. Paz, ever the reputed rival of Sobieski, who had remained inactive till that critical moment, now rousing his giant strength, darted forward like a thunderbolt, with his Lithuanian nobles, in the midst of every danger, determined to arrive first in the Ottoman camp. But the tardy Paz was too late. Already the flaming lances of the victorious grand hetman gleamed on the summits of the entrenchments; while Sobieski, ever awake to the multifarious duties of a commander, was engaged in re-forming the broken ranks of the assailants, disordered by the assault and their success; and prepared for a new battle in the midst of that city of eastern tents, which in reality had been already conquered, though as yet the Turks entertained some doubts of the victory.

But the awful ravages of war had just now commenced. The astonishment, terror, and confusion of the besieged, the cries of helpless, worthless, mangled women, shut up in the harems, the impetuous shock and thundering charges of the heavy squadrons clothed in impenetrable steel, and composed of the impetuosity

of youth, spread terror and death through the ranks of the Turks, and gave them no time to recover from their consternation, nor rally from their confusion. It was no longer a battle, but a massacre. The horrors of war had given place to the struggles of death. Demetrius and the Lithuanian now met in the camp of death. At the same time, a universal shriek of horror rose from the whole Turkish ranks, and the mingled death-screams of more than one hundred thousand perishing human beings reverberated through the heavens, ringing from hill to valley, while the miserable victims rushed in crowds to the boats, which bridged the bloody Dniester from Chocim to Kamaniek. In their last struggle to reach this sole outlet from destruction, multitudes, trampling down each other, perished on the spot.

But Sobieski's usual foresight had anticipated the retreat, and deprived the unfortunate beings of this last resource. His brother-in-law, Radziwil, during the tumult, had glided unperceived through the bottom of the ravines, and at the critical moment made himself master of the only bridge between conquered Chocim and the fortified city of Kamaniek. The bewildered fugitives, on seeing the last avenue of safety closed against them, yielding to despair, now rushed to their last and hopeless resort, and plunged themselves into the waves, where twenty thousand Turks perished on the shores, or in the half-congealed stream. Madly determined in their fell revenge, and insatiable in their thirst for carnage, the hussars, led by Maziniki, pursued them on horseback into the very bed of the Dnieper, and there sabred them by thousands, when struggling for breath in the icy stream; where the waters for several leagues ran red with the blood of more than forty thousand infidels, whose corpses were

thrown upon the deserted shores by the surge of every dashing wave.

The victory was now complete. Poland was saved, the Turk was humbled by the shivering blow, and the name of John Sobieski was immortalized. The news of one of the greatest battles ever witnessed by the sun flew in all directions, on the wings of the wind. The Capitan Pacha, who was approaching with a fresh army to annihilate Poland, on hearing the tidings so disastrous to the Ottoman power, immediately set fire to his camp, and retreated across the Danube in wild despair. The Moldavians and Wallachians made their peace with the Polish conqueror, and the arrogant Turks, who had been so severely rebuked, began to tremble for their capital. All Europe, electrified with the heretofore unparalleled victory, returned thanks to the God of battles for the deliverance of Christendom from the grasping power of the Turks. Poland quivered with joy, that the nation had so narrowly escaped from the ignominy of bondage.*

But how soon the scene changed! While Europe was anxiously awaiting the intelligence of the complete overthrow of the Osmanlis, mutability, desertion, and flight had ruined the Polish army. Instead of pursuing the enemy, and turning the victory to good account, and crushing their worst foe, already crippled and in their power, the fickle-minded Poles ran home to hold a jubilee with their friends. Whole palatinates abandoned their colors, in strange anxiety to carry home in safety the spoils of the luxuriant East, and to prepare for that new field of battle which was soon to be witnessed in the election of a Polish king. Sobieski, though a candidate for the throne, remained a short time on the battle-ground, almost alone. And at that interesting

* Salvandy, II., 130, 152.

moment, when Wallachia and Moldavia were surrendering their dominions to the power and protection of the Polish crown, when the cowardly Capitan Pacha was flying to the foot of the Balkan, and Sobieski was dreaming of a crown and of changing the face of the world by the force of his arms, his once invincible army melted away and dissolved. The wily Turk laying low in his lair, began to recover from his terror as the Polish army vanished from sight, leaving the Mussulman power still to be perpetuated in Europe for many years. Disease, which had long been doing his work of death, kindly relieved the Poles from the inert and corrupt reign of Michael, on the very eve of this celebrated battle. Well has the warm-hearted and eloquent Salvandy said: "The day of Chocim was too great to be counted in this sad reign."*

The Poles, flushed with the recent victory of Chocim, now repaired with their magnificent spoils—the fruits of their recent triumph—to the plains of Volo, to fight over their battles in ignominy and domestic war, in the election of their great hero, John Sobieski, to the throne of Poland. There the Polish aristocrats pompously displayed their oriental magnificence, where their gorgeous camp resembled an eastern city, ornamented with its markets, its gardens, its hotels, and its monuments. The luxury and splendor of the occasion seemed to vie with each other in rival magnificence; while the immense hotels, the porticoes, the colonnades, the galleries of painted or gilded stuffs, the castles of cotton and silk, with their drawbridges, towers, and ditches, most of which had been taken from the Turks in the recent battle of Chocim, all conspired in the corrupting scenes which ultimately led to the fall of Poland. Judging from the

* Salvandy, II., 165.

multitude of stalls, kitchens, baths, audience-chambers, the elegance of the oriental architecture, the taste of the designs, the profusion of gilded crosses, domes, and pagodas, the stranger would imagine that the regalia of some eastern sultan had been transported by enchantment to the banks of the Vistula. And yet, strange as it may seem, victory had accomplished this prodigy: these were the tents of Mahomet IV., taken at the battle of Chocim. Sobieski, though absent, was the hero of the day; and his triumphant arms surmounted the crescent of Mahomet.

But the darkest feature in the story of Sobieski's election remains to be told. The refractory Lithuanians were encamped on the opposite shores of the Vistula, where their grand hetman, Michael Paz, had marshalled his whole force to dictate laws to the Polish crown. Sobieski had previously occupied the bridge over the river by a regiment of hussars, upon which the Lithuanians seized every house in the city which wealth could control. These hostile preparations were but the preliminaries of the civil war which followed; and the same trusty blades which, but only a few days previous, had dripped with the blood of Turks, were now buried in the bosoms of the victors, in the madness of political strife and the savage cruelty of domestic carnage. In the midst of the popular rejoicings, civil war soon ensued between Lithuania and Poland. Every time the opposite factions met, their strife terminated in bloodshed and murder. And so contagious and corrupting is the power of example, especially on the youth, that these barbaric hostilities extended to every branch of society, and even to the bloody game of the Klopiches, which was played by a confederation of the boys in the city, including pages and valets, who amused themselves by forming troops, electing a marshal,

choosing a field of battle, and fighting over the battles of their ancestors and sires in mortal combat.

On this and on similar occasions, these beardless desperadoes were divided into corps of Lithuanians and Poles, who hoisted the colors of their respective states, procured fire-arms to imitate more completely the habits of the equestrian order, and disturbed the plain everywhere by their noisy marches, or terrified the spectators by their assaults. The outrages of these youthful, drunken mobs frequently desolated the plains; the villages were in flames; the savage huts, of which the suburbs of Warsaw were then composed, were invaded and sacked, sometimes at the expense of the lives of the humble peasants who occupied them; slaves were used as targets and victims of these deadly sports, which were invented by the Poles, and had been practised from an early day, for the purpose of inuring the youth to civil war, and cultivating a taste for blood, as the means of improving the civil and moral condition of the children, and for the gratification of their parents. Such was the state of society in Warsaw, and throughout Poland, as late as the election of John Sobieski.*

The throne now being vacant, Sobieski's royal ambition renewed its energy, and, taking every precaution to throw obstacles in the way of his competitors, at length, when the Elective Diet was in a state of hesitation, he took them by surprise, and carried his election. His friend, Jablonowski, palatine of Polish Russia, at this critical moment, arose and addressed the assembly:

"Having arrived at the close of this stormy discussion, we have all agreed what kind of a king our present circumstances demand. We know that the crown is a heavy burden, and it remains to see who has most strength to bear it. We can have a

* Salvandy, II., 190—197.

chief, a companion, and judge of our labors, a citizen of our country. I demand that a Pole shall reign over Poland. Among us is a man who, having saved the state ten times by his counsels and his victories, is regarded by all the world, as well as by ourselves, as the greatest, the first of the sons of Poland. One last consideration affects me. Poles! if we deliberate here in peace on the election of a king, if the most illustrious powers solicit our suffrages, if our strength is increased, if our liberty is in existence, if even we have a country, to whom are we indebted for it? Recall to mind the wonders of Slobodissa, Podhaice, Kaluss, and, above all, Chocim,—immortal names,—and take for your king, John Sobieski!"

This eloquent speech had its effect, and Sobieski was elected King of Poland on the 19th of May, 1674.*

Sobieski, after his election, resolved to defer the coronation ceremony until after he had conquered the Turks; and that he might retain the office of grand-general for a time. He fought the Tartars and Turks with the stimulus and ambition of personal animosity; and, as every Moslem who was laid low by his arms might have been the murderer of his uncle or brother, they were, in his estimation, so many libations of atonement to appease the manes of his slaughtered relations. After several skirmishes, the Polish troops with only 15,000, encountered the Turks and Tartars near Leopol, in Gallicia, with a force of more than 60,000. A heavy fall of snow in the month of August—no uncommon event in the history of Polish climate—greatly retarded the progress of the enemy, and, by the superstitious Poles, was considered a miracle in their favor; and, believing that Heaven was on their side, they fought the more desperately, and, in the firm belief of a

* Fletcher, 85.

sudden and complete victory, left 10,000 of the enemy dead on the field, and routed the entire army.*

The grand vizier in his retreat, invested Trembowla, a small town strongly fortified, in Podolia, which was defended by Samuel Chrasanowski, a Jew. The Turk successively demanded a surrender and negotiation; but the brave Jewish governor replied, "Thou art mistaken if thou expectest to find gold within these walls, we have nothing here but steel and soldiers; our number indeed is small, but our courage is great." The Turkish general then opened a heavy cannonade upon the town, but without effect. The wife of the Jewish commander, who was the greatest warrior of the two, resolutely assisted with her own hands to supply ammunition. The inert, wrangling, cowardly Polish nobles of this station, as usual, began to plan a surrender, which was overheard by this female general, who immediately rushed through the thickest of the fire to inform her husband, whose threats and persuasions induced them to continue the defence of the town. The battle continued with increased vigor, and, amid the trembling, crushing walls of Trembowla, the Jewish heroine, fearing the courage of her husband might fail him in such awful moments for the trial of men's souls, seizing two poniards, said to him, "One of these is destined for thee, if thou surrenderest this town; the other I intend for myself." At this interesting moment, the Polish army, headed by Sobieski, appeared in sight, and again routed the Moslem forces, with a loss of eight thousand on the field.

Sobieski, having won fresh laurels by his recent victories over the Turks and Tartars, now returned home to witness the festivities and ceremonies of his deferred coronation; where the king

*Fletcher, 88.

was little more than a *rex designatus* till his election was confirmed by the royal inauguration. The funeral of the deceased king, by the Polish custom, was deferred till his successor had been appointed to succeed him; for the purpose of avoiding the appearance of an interregnum,—in a country where no one and every one reigned. By a singular coincidence, it happened on the present occasion the funeral ceremonies of two kings were performed Casimir had lately died in France, and the same dirge was sung at the obsequies of both him and Michael. These ceremonies were doubtless designed to teach new monarchs their mortal end. The ceremony then concluded by the new king appearing in the Stanislas-Kirche, where Boleslas murdered the prelate. The new king, as if *he* were the perpetrator of the foul deed, went to the spot on foot, and declared, according to their custom, that the crime was atrocious, that he was innocent of it, detested it, and asked pardon, by imploring the protection of the holy martyrs upon himself and his kingdom. The coronation medals bore the device of a naked sword passing through several crowns of laurel, and at the point was a regal crown with this inscription, "*Per has ad istam.*"

As soon as these royal pageants were over, and while the music of his coronation was yet ringing in his ears, Sobieski was again compelled to take the field against the Moslem foe, in September, 1676. With a small army of only thirty-eight thousand, he marched against two hundred thousand Turks and Tartars. He made his head-quarters at Zurawno, a little town in Pokucia, on the west of the Dniester, where he fortified his camp with entrenchments. The Turkish army was encamped on the other side of the river, and had cut off all communication in the rear of the Poles. This was a most critical moment in the history of Poland

and modern Europe. The king opened his operations by sending to the Tartar prince proposals of peace, but without effect. The Turks now attempted to pass over the river, but were repulsed with great loss; and Ibrahim, after opening his batteries on the Polish camp, met with such determined resistance to all his demands and hostile movements, that he was compelled to make peace on the terms dictated by the Polish sovereign. In this treaty two thirds of the Ukraine were given up to Poland; the other third was to remain in the hands of the Cossacks, under the protection of the Sultan; and Podolia was restored, except Kamieniec. After concluding this treaty, John returned to Poland with the honors of having obtained a complete victory over his worst enemy.

Sobieski now gave the French ambassador audience, and was invested with the order of the "Holy Ghost," by order of Louis XIV., which displeased the democracy of the Poles, who said, "It was stooping to the pride of France to wear its livery." The king now had five years' peace—destitute however of all its enjoyments—in consequence of the continued petty warfare of political intrigues, carried on by his artful wife and prodigal sons, aided by the hypocritical Jesuits and factious nobles. The queen was an artful woman, and frequently tempted her royal consort from the path of duty, for a moment; but his sober second thoughts soon corrected his temporary errors. His hatred to the Turks continued unabated, and he had long wished another opportunity to chastise them still more severely; till at length his long sought for opportunity arrived. Leopold, emperor of Germany and king of Hungary, had caused his Hungarian subjects to revolt, by violations of their national liberties. The celebrated Tekeli, one of the principal nobles of that oppressed country,

was their leader, who formed an alliance with the Turks. Mohammed required Leopold to withdraw all his Austrian troops from Hungary, which was considered a formal declaration of war. The cowardly Leopold immediately solicited the aid of the Poles, which Sobieski accepted, and agreed to furnish 48,000 men, on condition that Leopold would relinquish his mortgage on the salt mines of Wielicska, which had been pledged by Casimir, as security for five million florins, and advance 1,200,000 florins for the expenses of the expedition.

The Sultan's forces were ready in April, 1683; but, as the truce had not yet expired, he kept good faith, and took no advantage of Leopold's unprepared army. In the beginning of May, 1683, the Moslem army commenced its march for Vienna, with nearly three hundred thousand men. Two thirds of them were Hungarians and Tartars, armed with a plenty of provisions and ammunition, and more than three hundred heavy pieces of artillery. Their commander was Kara Mustapha, the grand vizier, with plenary power from the Sultan. The duke of Lorraine, Leopold's brother-in-law, who was formerly one of Sobieski's competitors for the Polish crown, commanded the Imperial troops, who only numbered 37,000 men.

The vizier marched his army from Belgrade, along the western side of the Danube to Vienna, without any resistance. The timid and haughty Leopold fled from town to town before the Tartars, sleeping now and then with his empress in the forest, on a bundle of straw; while he viewed, behind him, the flames of his palace and city, blazing in the horizon, and mingling with the flames of the cottages of his subjects.

Fortune, which had already been so lavish with her gifts to Sobieski in the battle of Chocim, and in his subsequent election

to the throne, was now about to reveal to her favorite the further mysteries of her kindness, and seal his title to immortal fame with the battle of Vienna. The king of Poland, now fifty-four years old, and in such feeble health as to require aid to mount his charger, was the only man in the world to whom the German empire could look for protection. After a most severe and disastrous siege of eight months, by the cruel Turks, and with open trenches for sixty days, suffering Vienna was reduced to the last extremity. Famine, disease, and the sword, had cut off two thirds of its garrison; and the miserable inhabitants, bankrupt in fortune, depressed by incessant toil for the last six months, day and night, disappointed in their long deferred hopes, which brought no promise of relief from any quarter, yielded to the agonies of despair. Numerous breaches were already made, in the heretofore impenetrable and time-beaten walls of old Vienna. The massy bastions which had defied the raging storm and forked lightnings for centuries, were now fast crumbling in ruins before the batteries of the Infidels; and the temporary intrenchments thrown up in haste in the streets, formed the last resource of the German capital. Despair had almost seized the heart of Stahremborg, the governor of the city, who announced to his trembling citizens, the necessity of surrendering, if not relieved in three days; while every fatal night, by its signals of distress from the summits of the steeples, announced to the world above and below, the suffering extremities of the devoted city.

And from what quarter did relief come? Was it from liberty-loving France? No! Was it from good old England? No! Was it from powerful Russia? No! Was it from those dastardly Prussians, who subsequently murdered Poland, and have ever since watched her ghastly corpse with sabre and lance, fearing

that the weltering victim might possibly resuscitate? No! It was from that very victim—the once noble, generous, world-famed Poland, the deliverer of Vienna and defender of Christendom, that relief came in this dismal hour of forlorn extremity. And what did magnanimous and generous Poland receive in return for this unparalleled kindness? Not a dollar—not one grateful word or look; but treachery, robbery, and assassination from the hands of their German beneficiaries.

> "Then what is man! And what man seeing this,
> And having human feelings, does not blush
> And hang his head, to think himself a man?"

The sun which had coursed so quietly and faithfully through the heavens, daily watching the ferocious Turks, and gazing on the helpless condition of Vienna, as if disgusted with the scenes of human butchery which this fallen world presented, had modestly veiled his face with the golden clouds of the far west, and vanished from the sight of the anxious sufferers. Despair seemed to hover in every point of the horizon. The trembling sentinel, who was on the watch at the top of the towering steeple of old St. Stephen, ranges his far-seeing eye at every point of the compass, with a lingering hope of succor from some unknown quarter; while the man of God bows in his devotions at the altar beneath, invoking aid from the great God of battles,—but no relief comes. Again the faithful watch on his lofty tower rallies all his optics, and ranges his best vision through every hopeful point in the dim distance, in vain—and sinks back in despair. Again the man of prayer bows himself in his last agony at the lonely altar beneath—but all, as yet, in vain. The placid moon in the silence of night, now hastens to the relief of the despond-

ing watch, and as he again casts his piercing eyes over the slumbering world, carefully tracing the silver rays of the queen of night, as she lights up in the far distance, the forests, fields, and lawns—till at last he sees a blazing flame on the summits of the Calemberg; and one anxious look more, revealed the joyful sight of an army preparing to descend the ridge. The thrilling news runs like electricity through the city—every telescope was instantly turned in that direction, while

> "They see them on their winding way,
> About their ranks the moonbeams play,
> Their lofty deeds and daring high
> Blend with the notes of victory."

The brilliancy of their lances, and the splendor of their banners, together with the roar of the deep-toned cannon, soon confirmed the joyful tidings that the hussars of Poland, the conquerors of Osmanlis, and the hero of Chocim, were approaching for the relief of despairing Vienna.

The Turks, who readily understood that the advancing king of Poland was a signal for them to fight or run, immediately roused from their slumbers, their licentiousness, and midnight orgies, and began to think of victory or death. The ghosts of Chocim, as they imagined, flew through their ranks, and they began to talk of another reckoning with John Sobieski. Immediately were seen officers and couriers flying on their Arabian steeds, from tent to tent, in every direction, dividing their vast and almost numberless hosts, into two great divisions, one of which was destined to oppose their new enemy, and one to continue the assaults on the besieged city. That was the ever memorable night which watched over the destiny of modern nations; while the glittering

stars looked down on the terrible conflict which was approaching, and which in a few fleeting moments was to settle the momentous question, involving the dearest interests of the Christian world, whether the cross or the crescent should float, not only over the walls of Vienna, but over the world for all coming time. The frantic shrieks of women, the shrill cries of helpless infancy, the moanings of the aged, the sick and the dying; the last sad farewell of friends, and the wailings of despair were now heard in every street and house of the devoted city, as they flocked to the churches and other places of security; while the governor advanced to the breaches with all his remaining forces, in anticipation of the approaching conflict.

The duke of Lorraine had previously left with a few of his best horsemen to join the king of Poland, and re-learn the art of war under so great a master. The two illustrious commanders, soon after meeting, concerted a plan of operations; and Sobieski encamped on the Danube, with all his forces, in union with the empire troops. It was a precious moment in the history of humanity, when with tears of joy, palpitating hearts, and trembling limbs, the sovereigns, generals, and soldiers of the Imperialists, received the illustrious chief, whom heaven had been kindly rearing for more than half a century, for the relief of Christendom from the tiger-grasp of the Turks. Discord, always a prevalent foe in the times of danger, had reigned in the Imperial camp before the arrival of the Polish hero; but now confidence was restored, and all cheerfully yielded obedience to the great commander.

The duke of Lorraine had taken the precaution to construct a triple bridge at Tulin, six leagues below Vienna, in the presence of Kara Mustapha, the Turkish commander, who made no oppo-

sition. The German electors, however, hesitated to cross the river; while the severity of the weather, the long rains, and almost impassable roads, filled the hearts of all the forces with alarm, except the king of Poland, who was a stranger to fear, and an enemy to delay. The state of Vienna would admit of no delay. The last despatch of Stahremborg contained these laconic words: "There is no time to lose." To which Sobieski replied: "There is no reverse to fear; the general who at the head of three hundred thousand men could allow that bridge to be constructed in his teeth, cannot fail to be defeated." On the following day the liberators of Vienna—the defenders of Christendom passed in review before their allies. The Poles marched first, whose magnificent arms, splendid dresses, and beautiful horses, astonished the spectators. The infantry excited less admiration. One regiment in particular, by its battered and ragged appearance, touched the pride of the German monarch, who said it was a disgrace to the army, and advised Sobieski to send them over the river by night, to avoid the gaze and reproach of the spectators. But Sobieski thinking otherwise, said to the Imperialists: "Look well at these brave men; it is an invincible battalion, who have sworn never to renew their clothing, till they are arrayed in the spoils of the Turks; and in the last wars they were all clothed in the garb of Turks." They could now hear from Tulin the roar of the Turkish cannon, which, in fact, by this time had reduced Vienna almost to capitulation.

The Christian army, when all assembled, amounted to seventy thousand men, containing only thirty thousand infantry; eighteen thousand of whom were Poles. The king felt great disquietude on account of the absence of the Cossacks, whom Mynawicki had promised to bring into the field. These troops formed the most

successful scouts, and had always been the most formidable enemies to the Tartars. Their long experience in the Turkish wars had rendered them masters of this species of warfare; and no other force could equal them, in gaining intelligence, and capturing prisoners. They received ten crowns for every man they brought in after this manner; and, leading their captives to the tent of their king, where they received their bounty, they retired saying, "John, I have touched my money, God will repay you." In consequence of the absence of these faithful troops, the king was reduced to the painful necessity of exposing his hussars in exploring the dangerous defiles through which the army was about to pass. The Imperialists, who could not appreciate the king's attachment to that rude undisciplined militia, were surprised to hear the hero incessantly exclaiming, "Oh! Mynswicki. Oh! Mynzwicki."

A rough chain of rocky mountains, full of narrow and precipitous ravines, interspersed with forests, rocks, barren soil, and the thick-tangled wild-woods, known to classical Rome as the Mons Ætius, and called by the moderns the Calemberg—with all their romantic mountain scenery—now separated the two armies of Mahomet and Christendom. As these mountains projected their rocky front into the middle of the Danube, nature had left the Christian hosts the only and desperate alternative of scaling the formidable barrier. Fortunately, Turkish stupidity, which is ever more fond of smoking tobacco and sipping coffee, than the fatigues of war, had neglected to fortify these posts, where a few battalions might have arrested the Polish army, and thus have consigned for ever the fate of the Christian world, to the merciless tyranny of Mohammedan infidelity.

The boasted confidence of the Turks, and the cowardly dis-

quietude of the imperialists, were equally surprising and disgusting to the Polish hero. So terrific were the countless numbers of the vast host of the Mussulmen, that the first cry of Allah! put whole battalions of the dastardly Germans to flight. Thousands of the peasants were incessantly engaged day and night in grading roads over the mountains, and cutting through forests. The foot-soldiers repeatedly exhausted their strength in dragging the artillery, with their arms, from peak to peak, and to their extreme mortification, were compelled to abandon the heaviest pieces at the foot of the mountain. Chiefs and soldiers, kings and subjects, lords and slaves, all laid aside their aristocracy, and making a common democracy of the good cause, each carried his own provisions; while the leaves of the oak were the only subsistence of their splendid war-horses. Some of the wearied scouts, who reached the summit of the ridge long before the remainder of the army, and there surveyed the countless myriads of the Turkish tents extending far in the distance to the walls of Vienna, were so terrified at the sight, that they, returning with dismay, spread a contagious panic through the army.

The hero of Chocim, whose greatness never left him in times of danger, rallied all his herculean powers, and flying from battalion to battalion, with all his usual courage, pleasantry, nonchalance, and eloquence, reminded them of their former victories over the infidels, and pointing to the spirits of their departed sires, who were then watching their movements, and welcoming their heroic sons to their last and most glorious victory, until by his irresistible appeals, he quieted all their fears, "calm as the breast of the lake, when the loud winds are laid."

The astonishment of the timid imperialists was quadrupled, when they learned that the fickle Janizzaries, ever ripe for trea-

son, who composed the king's guard, and constantly surrounding his person on the march, were the fruits of his former victories over the Turks. To remove all fears from this quarter, and to disarm these fickle monuments of his former battles of every pretence for revolt—as they approached their former companions in the Ottoman camp—he offered them their choice to retire in safety to the rear, or return to their friends in the Turkish army, or enjoy the luxury and glory of dying by his side in the approaching battle. But they all, with one united voice, and with tears in their eyes, made the forest resound with their cries, which re-echoed from the distant hills, and roared through the plains and deep ravines, "We will live and die with you!"

Sobieski's victory was now complete in anticipation. His camp was quiet. His matchless heroism had triumphed alike over infidels and Christians, chiefs and soldiers. At length that interesting night arrived when the patient and anxious watch on the summit of St. Stephen's tower, first descried in the hazy distance, the watch-fires of the Christian heroes on the summit of Mount Calemberg. It was Saturday, September 11th, of the year 1683, when the army encamped, at eleven o'clock in the forenoon, on that sterile mountain, where they occupied the convent of Camaldoli, and the old castle of Leopoldsburgh. There it was that distance performed its double work of lending both terror and enchantment to the view. From this mountain the Christians were presented with one of the finest, the most imposing, and most dreadful prospects of the greatness of human power. An immense plain was spread out before them, with all the islands of the Danube, richly carpeted with all the beautiful and variegated hues of flowers, forests, fields, and lawns, which compose the landscape of Vienna and its suburbs, covered with

pavilions, whose magnificence seemed better adapted to an encampment of pleasure than the hardships of war; swarming with an innumerable multitude of horses, camels, and buffaloes, and two hundred thousand warrors, all in motion; with immense masses of Tartars dispersed along the foot of the mountain in their usual confusion; while the fire of the besiegers, incessant and terrible, intermingled with that of the besieged, in the centre of which could be seen the great city of Vienna, distinguishable only by the tops of the steeples and the fire and smoke that enveloped it. Far beneath, as far as the best eyes and glasses could range, extended the vast and uneven plains of Austria, covered with its smoking capital, the gilded tents, the bewildered inhabitants, running to and fro to escape the blades of the Turks, swarming with the countless host of the besiegers, whose spears and sabres glittered with the sunbeams; while at the foot of the ridge, where the lofty mountain gradually sank into the plain, the forests and ravines were occupied by the advanced guards of the enemy, prepared to try titles to the passage of the Polish army with lance and sabre.

But Sobieski, nothing daunted by all this formidable power and splendor, coolly and calmly glancing his eagle eye over the battle ground where his success or failure was to settle the destiny of nations, said—"This man is badly encamped; he knows nothing of war; we shall certainly beat him. He has selected a bad position. I understand him; he is ignorant and persuaded of his own genius. We shall gain no honor from this victory."

The Turks, confiding in their vast numbers and oriental prowess, pressed the assault of Vienna on one side, while on the other they prepared for the reception of the king of Poland. The Turkish vizier, surrounded with all the military halo of

Asiatic luxury and splendor, now exultingly counted in his ranks four Christian princes, and as many Tartar chiefs. All the nobles of Germany and Poland were found in the imperial army, with Sobieski at their head; who was at once the Agamemnon and Achilles of antiquity, and the Napoleon of modern war. The cannonade on the city opened at the break of day, and for this purpose, the vizier on his part, had withdrawn from his army the Janissaries, his infantry, and nearly all his artillery. Kara Mustapha so grossly underrated the force of his opponents, that the light cavalry, the Spahis, the Tartars, and other irregular troops, were the forces destined to encounter the Polish and German forces. Ibrahim Pacha, one of the greatest generals of the day, commanded the Moslem army; although he had no confidence in the war, nor its plan of operations.

The youthful Eugene of Savoy, whose martial buds had already reached maturity, now began to blossom; and the first fruits of his arms was the unexpected and rapid intelligence which he brought to Sobieski, that the engagement had already commenced between the advanced guards at the foot of the ridge. The Christians, eager for the fight, immediately descended the mountains in five columns, rushing down upon the plains like mountain torrents, but in good order. It was necessary for the leading divisions to halt at every hundred paces, to give time to the rear to join them, who were delayed by the difficulties of the descent. A momentary struggle forced the rude parapet, which the Turks had hastily erected to bar the five debouches of the roads into the plain. At every ravine, the king's troops met fresh obtacles, which they surmounted with almost miraculous celerity. The Spahis, who dismounted to contest the rocky ascents, speedily remounted their saddles as the passes were

forced, and fell back in hosts to the next positions which were to be defended. But after all the resistance of the Mussulmen, who found it impossible with their feeble infantry to withstand the steady, solid, and advancing masses of the Germans, the Christian army was everywhere prevailing. The garrison of Vienna, cheered by the success of their approaching deliverers, almost performed miracles on the breach; while Kara Mustapha, who had long hesitated which battle he should join, determined to measure sabres with the Polish king and his far-famed squadrons.

By two o'clock, the ravines being cleared, and the allies drawn up in battle array on the plain, Sobieski ordered the duke of Lorraine to halt, and give the Poles time to join the army, who had lost time by a circuitous march. At length they came up, and took their post on the right, as late as eleven, when the imperial eagles saluted the squadrons shining in their gilded cuirasses, with cries of "Long live King John Sobieski!" and as the shouts of joy were repeated through the extended lines the Mussulman army began to show signs of trepidation.

Some warm skirmishing occurred at eight in the morning; and at eleven, the Christian army was arrayed in the plain, when Kara Mustapha, beginning to apprehend that the allies were more powerful than he anticipated, changed his purpose, and took the command in person, standing in the centre, opposite to Sobieski, who occupied the centre of his army. The engagement had been only partial previous to five in the evening. Sobieski was waiting for his infantry, who had not come up; and the inert, effeminate vizier, amused himself in his splendid crimson tent with his coffee and other eastern luxuries; while the powerful

king and hero of Poland was watching his movements and planning his conquest.

The moment the infantry came up, Sobieski ordered them to seize an eminence which commanded the position of the vizier; which was immediately done, and decided the fate of the day. This grand manœuvre so surprised and terrified the vizier, that he immediately ordered his infantry to his right wing, which movement threw all his line into confusion. The Polish king, Napoleon-like, instantly took advantage of his enemy's blunder, and directing all his forces to their weak points, exclaimed to his brave comrades—"They are lost men." He ordered the duke of Lorraine to attack the centre, which was weak and exposed.

Sobieski, at the head of his troops, charged furiously through the Turks, directing his attack against the scarlet tent of the Sultan, and surrounded by his powerful squadrons, he was instantly recognised by the streamers which adorned the lances of his guard; distinguished from all others by his bow and quiver of gold, which were suspended on his shoulders, and by his magnificent dress, surmounted by his splendid plume, borne by one of the most majestic war-horses of all Europe, mounted with the handsomest prince of the age, together with the enthusiasm which his presence everywhere excited, all contributed to the grandeur and sublimity of the scene, which struck terror and death into the ranks of the infidel foe. With this imposing array, the hero of the eastern continent, with his trusty squadrons, like so many thunderbolts from Heaven, dashed through the plain with sabre and lance directed at the heads and hearts of the trembling Turks, while the Christian hero exclaimed as he advanced—"*Non nobis, Domine, sed tibi sit gloria.*"

The moment the Tartars and the Spahis heard the name of

the Polish hero repeated in rapid succession through the long lines of the Ottoman forces, they fled in confusion and dismay. Soon the cry was heard from Sultan Gieray, "By Allah! the king is with them." At this critical moment of life and death, when the momentous question, "To be, or not to be," was to be decided in a few moments, not only for Europe but for all Christendom, Nature seemed to sympathise with the cause of human freedom. The rising queen of the night, who had heretofore gazed upon the scene of deadly combat with her usual serenity, veiled her placid countenance in a total eclipse, as if disgusted with the sight of human butchery; which sent home to the hearts of the superstitious Turks the terrors of death, as they beheld the ominous crescent of their prophet waning in the frowning heavens. At the same moment, the hussars under the command of Prince Alexander, who formed the leading column, rushed into a charge, amidst a universal cry at the top of every voice, "God defend Poland!" The remaining squadrons, panting for the blood of tyrants, led by the noblest and bravest generals of the country, filled with courage, and charging at a gallop, cleared, without drawing bridle, a ravine at which even the best infantry might have faltered, and rushed furiously up the opposite bank. The shock of the charging columns against the Turkish masses was so sudden and overpowering that they cut the opposing army in two almost instantly.

The charge was so violent and shivering that almost all the lances were splintered to atoms. The celebrated pachas of Aleppo and Silistria were slain on the spot, and four other distinguished pachas fell lifeless under the death-blows of Joblonowski. At the same time, Charles of Lorraine had completely routed the force of the principalities, and had nearly reached the Ottoman

camp. Kara Mustapha gave up in despair, exclaiming to the Kara of the Crimea, as he passed the fugitives, "Can you not aid me?" He answered, "I know the king of Poland, and I told you that if we had to deal with him, all we could do would be to run away. Look at the moon; see if God is not against us." Mustapha in vain strove to rally his panic-stricken troops, who were fleeing in all directions, not daring even to raise their eyes towards the frowning heavens. The awful crisis in the history of nations was over. The cause of civilization and Christianity had triumphed, and the Mussulman power fled from Europe, never more to return. At six in the evening, Sobieski, entering the Turkish camp, arrived first at the quarters of the vizier, where a slave met him, and presented him with the charger and golden bridle of Mustapha. The hero of Vienna, taking the bridle, ordered one of his aids to hasten to the queen of Poland, and say to her that he who owned that bridle was vanquished. He then planted his standard in the midst of the armed caravansara of all Asia, and ordered Charles of Lorraine to drive the besiegers from the trenches before Vienna. But, fortunately, that work was already done; the Janizzaries had deserted their posts on the approach of the evening; and after a dreadful siege of sixty days, with open trenches, the imperial city was almost miraculously delivered from the ravages of Turkish war.

The following morning revealed to the astonished victors the magnitude of their glorious victory. The vast plain was covered with the trophies of war, containing the choicest treasures of the East. One hundred and twenty thousand tents were still standing, after scores of them had been destroyed by the exasperated infidels. The countless masses of the Orientals had disappeared; but their gorgeous spoils, their splendid Arabian horses, their

camels, and their wealth of all kinds covered the ground. The king, at ten, approaching Vienna, passed through the breach where the ferocious Turks would have entered in triumph the same day, but for the prowess of the immortal hero. At his approach, another soul-stirring scene in this drama was revealed, which seldom falls to the lot of history to record. The streets having been cleared of their ruins for the king and suite, every avenue, street, and lane, every window, house, and eminence, was filled and covered with human beings of all ages, sexes, and conditions, whose hearts and eyes were overflowing with joy, as they gazed on their glorious deliverer, and made the heavens ring with their shouts of victory and grateful praise. They all with one consent followed the king to the ancient church of the Augustins, where, in the absence of the clergy, who had not arrived, they chanted with their hero, *Te Deum*, in humble, grateful praise to the God of Hosts. The same service was soon afterwards performed with far greater ceremony and devout solemnity, in the old cathedral of St Stephen, where, but a few short hours previous, the trembling watch on the top of the spire, and the man of God at the foot of the altar, had so patriotically served their country and their God. In this heavenly service, the humble and pious Sobieski, crowned with all the laurels of fame, joined, while the noble form of the prince, overcome with the grateful sensations of Divine goodness, lay low in the dust, with his face to the ground.* It was there, in the midst of this scene, that the priest announced from the sacred altar that memorable text, "There was a man sent from God whose name was John."

In 1686, on the 6th of May, Sobieski, worn out in a life of war at home and abroad, despairing of ever introducing an orderly,

* Salvandy, III., 50, 101.

peaceable government in Poland, and constantly harassed with the petty quarrels of the nobility, and their continued strife to dethrone their king and filch his crown, concluded a treaty with Russia without the consent of the Diet, by which he surrendered to the Czar, Smolensko, Czerniechow, Kiow, and Severia, very much to the prejudice of Poland. This treaty was a great mistake, and ruined his peace and prospects ever after. Poland had so far sunk in moral and political degradation that their brave and wise king had no control over them, and seeing his approaching dissolution, worn down with his long and repeated efforts to organize a regular government for his people, clearly foreseeing the approaching fatal catastrophe of his country, sunk in despair, and gave up all as lost. His reign was one continued struggle with aristocratic anarchy. The aged hero, now fast approaching the grave, with a heart filled with grief at the future prospects of his countrymen, gave vent to his feelings in his last speech in the senate, in the following prophetic and eloquent language:

"I am well acquainted with the griefs of the soul who said that small distresses have to declare themselves, but great ones are silent. The world will be mute with amazement at the contemplation of us and our councils. Nature herself will be astonished! That beneficent Parent has gifted every living creature with the instinct of self-preservation, and given the most inconsiderable animals arms for their defence; we alone, in the universe, turn ours against ourselves. That instinct is taken from us, not by any resistless force, not by an inevitable destiny, but by a voluntary insanity, by our own passion, by the desire of destruction. Alas! what will one day be the mournful surprise of posterity, to find that, from the summit of glory, from the period when the Polish name filled the universe, our country has fallen

into ruins, and fallen, alas! for ever. I have been able to gain for you victories, but I feel myself unable to save you from yourselves. Nothing remains to be done but to place in the hands, not of destiny—for I am a Christian—but of a powerful and beneficent Deity, the fate of my beloved country. Believe me, the eloquence of your tribunes, instead of being turned against the throne, would be better directed against those who, by their disorders, are bringing down upon our country the cry of the prophet—which I, alas! hear too clearly rolling over our heads: 'Yet forty years, and Nineveh will be no more.' "

Thus spake the pious, the wise, the good, and great Sobieski, the last and best of Poland's kings; and, on the 17th of June, 1696, surrendered his noble spirit to the Divine Being, who inspired his speech. The predictions of the hero were fulfilled ultimately, though not exactly in the order of time. His modesty, always the characteristic of greatness, lost sight of the ameliorating influence of his own glory, which, in spite of the radical madness of his subjects, prolonged the existence of Poland for nearly a hundred years. The last triumph of the republic was his posthumous conquest of the frontier town of Kamieck from the Turks. Sobieski was the last national sovereign of the Poles who commanded the respect of the world; and the king and his kingdom fell together. True, there was a short period of dying existence, while its provinces were invaded by foreign arms, and the Saxons, Swedes, Muscovites, Imperialists, and Russians, each in their turn ruled its destinies. But, at last, the awful moment, so truly predicted by the departed hero, arrives. The Great Sovereign, whose watchful eye is over all his creatures,—from the destinies of nations, to the slumbering nestling on the

mountain oak,—withdraws His protecting power—and Poland is no more!

Sobieski with all his faults—and he who had no more did well in his time and place—will ever be regarded as a great man. As a general, he had no superior in his day, and but few in any age. Educated in the same school where Napoleon subsequently learned his tactics, and from whose history the latter seems to have drawn many useful lessons, especially in his sagacity to discover the weak points of his enemy, and charge upon the exposed and feeble forces with the rapidity of lightning, Sobieski was endowed with a clear and powerful intellect, capable of bringing all his powers to the investigation of any subject of his choice, in patient, calm, philosophical thought. He was a firm believer in the Christian religion, and died with strong hopes of a glorious immortality. As a general, he was brave and skilful, kind to his troops, and always their favorite. As a statesman and patriot, he loved his country, and used all his powers to introduce an orderly, regular government, and aimed at elevating his degraded subjects to a level with other European civilized nations; but all his national hopes were blasted, by the ambitious, refractory, and corrupt nobility. That he was not as successful in the state as in the field, is not strange; for no man, except Washington, was ever a model statesman and a perfect warrior. Had Poland followed the advice of Sobieski, she now would be a free and powerful nation. He was a tall and corpulent prince, having a large face and full eye; and always wore the same dress with his subjects. In war he was a lion, and in peace a lamb. He was eloquent and interesting in his speech; very easy of access, of commanding appearance, both on foot and horseback; extremely civil; and possessed the qualities and feelings

of a gentleman. As a general he ranked at the head of his profession; and all Europe could not produce his superior in the field. He was an accomplished scholar in all the polite and scholastic learning of his day. He was master of the Sclavonian, the Latin, French, Italian, German, and Turkish languages. The study of philosophy and general physics was his delight; while the arts and sciences received his most liberal patronage. And what is more than all, he was the devoted patriot of his country, and the fervent lover of Poland.

Though a daring warrior, he was an affectionate husband, and inspired with the best feelings of humanity in all the social relations of life. During his campaigns, he never forgot his domestic ties; and it was his constant practice to write daily to his wife. In old age he retained all the domestic tenderness and enthusiasm of his earlier years. At the age of fifty-four, at the battle of Vienna, in one of his letters to his queen, he says—"I read all your letters, my dear and incomparable Maria, thrice over; once when I receive them, once when I retire to my tent and am alone with my love, and once when I sit down to answer them. I beseech you, my beloved, do not rise so early; no health can stand such exertions; if you do, you will destroy my health, and what is worse, injure your own, which is my consolation in this world."*

When offered the throne of Poland, it was at first proposed that he should divorce his wife, and marry the widow of the late king, to reconcile the contending factions. To this proposition his faithful and affectionate heart indignantly said—"I am not yet a king, and have contracted no obligations towards the nation. Let them resume their gift: I disdain the throne if it is to be

* Salvandy, III., 50, 101.

purchased at such a price." No truer test of human greatness can be found, than conjugal fidelity, amid all the human frailties of life, unshaken both in prosperity and adversity.*

Section IV.

KOSCIUSKO.

The name of Thaddeus Kosciusko, one of the greatest men of Poland, is dear to the heart of every American, in whose battles for freedom he spent his youthful vigor, and freely shed his blood in the cause of human liberty. This child of fame was born in Lithuania, of a noble, but not very illustrious Lithuanian family, on the 12th of February, 1746, at the chateau of Sienniewicse, near Brzesc-Litenski. He was brought up at Warsaw, in "*L'Institute des Cadets*," where the young nobility, destined for the profession of war, were educated. The Czartoryski family, who were celebrated for liberal principles, and frequently assisted in bringing forward distinguished young men, took charge of the future hero's education. He was early distinguished for his youthful precocity, and excelled in his studies, particularly in mathematics and drawing; and was subsequently sent to France to finish his education.

In his youth, his affections were enlisted in favor of a young lady of great accomplishments and peculiar charms, the daughter of the marshal of Lithuania. His love would have been reciprocated but for the trifling circumstance of money, which is frequently controlling with the fair sex, and was found more plenty in the pockets of Prince Lubomirski, whose wealth

* Connor's Hist Poland, I., 163. Fletcher, 259.

secured the heart and hand of the fair lady; though his talents and moral worth were far inferior to our young hero, as the avaricious girl had the honesty to admit.

On leaving the cadet-school, he entered into a regiment as an officer, and returning to Poland, after a residence of seven years in France, he applied to Stanislas, then nominal king of Poland, for a military appointment; but was refused because he was a favorite of Adam Czartoryski, whom Stanislas detested; although he obtained a company. But his military career did not, in reality, commence till he went to the United States, where the British Colonies of America were then struggling to throw off the yoke of their unnatural and oppressive mother country. Kosciusko, believing their cause just, and one which was near his heart, resolved to aid in fighting the battles of freedom. The youthful hero was early fired with zeal in freedom's cause, by the thoughts of the wrongs of his country, by the political influence of Russia in Poland, particularly since the year 1764, when the artful Catharine crowned her old favorite, Stanislas Poniatowski, king of Poland; and by the first dismemberment of Poland, which began in 1772, and was confirmed in the following year by a vote of accession to the treaty of division, which was forcibly obtained from the Diet. Kosciusko, seeing his country's former glory rapidly fading away before the triple influence of Russia, Austria, and Prussia, and finding no chance to develop his useful and splendid gifts, while all the other governments of Europe preserved a cowardly, ungrateful, and unnatural silence at the progressive homicide of Poland, who had formerly fought their battles, and shielded them from the Moslem power and the disgrace of the crescent, turned his back with contempt, and left a continent of slaves and tyrants, to breathe the pure air of free-

dom in America, where freemen were battling for their lives, liberty, and firesides.

On his arrival in America, he presented himself to Washington, without any formal recommendation, humbly asking the privilege to participate in his battles. The honest-hearted general said to the Polish youth—"What do you come here for?" "I come to serve the cause of American Independence," was the laconic and simple answer of the young warrior. "What can you do?" said the father of American freedom. "Try me," replied the modest and gentlemanly Kosciusko.* Washington, who seldom was mistaken in his man, read him at once, and employed him as an officer; and this station soon gave the youth an opportunity to display his talents, his character, and bravery. On the 18th of October, 1776, Kosciusko, who had first served only as a volunteer in the American army, was appointed by Congress engineer, with the rank of colonel, in the service of the United States. He served successively as aid-de-camp to Generals Gates and Armstrong, and as engineer-colonel in the army of the South, comanded by General Gates, and afterwards by General Greene. On the 13th of October, 1783, he was raised to the rank of brigadier-general, on the recommendation of Washington, as a reward for his *long, faithful, and honorable services*, in the American army. His noble and disinterested conduct, his talents, and his courage, secured to him the confidence and general esteem of the army, of Washington, Gates, Franklin, Lafayette, and of the American people universally.

After fighting through the battles of human liberty in America, where he had rendered important services in gaining the independence of the United States, the Polish hero, crowned with laurels

* See Falkenstein's Life of Kosciusko.

won by his prowess, returned to his native country. After living for a long time in voluntary seclusion, meditating on the future destiny of his country and himself, he was made major general by the Diet; and used his best efforts in the useless and feeble attempts of his country, from 1788 to 1791, in resisting foreign influence and oppression.

Kosciusko gained great reputation in a battle fought on the 18th of June, 1791, at Volhynia, near the river Bug, while acting as general of division under young Poniatowski, the king's nephew, who commanded the troops against the army sent by Russia to overturn the constitution of the 3d of May, 1791. The Russian force, which extended from Dubienka to Opolin, attacked at the same moment all the Polish posts on that side of the Bug. The principal forces of the Czar selected Kosciusko as the shining mark of their hottest fire, who was stationed near Dubienka. He sustained the enemy's shock with unparalleled bravery and success for a long time; but being overwhelmed with the superior numbers of the swarming Russians, he was compelled to retreat, with the greatest order, to Chelm, the capital of the palatinate of that name. This engagement, which cost the Russian army four thousand men before they could cross the river, distinguished the brave Kosciusko, and inspired his fellow-soldiers with enthusiasm, and the greatest confidence in his talents and patriotism. But the weak and irresolute Stanislas, who tamely submitted to the conditions imposed upon him by Russia, soon blasted all the hopes of the Polish patriots.

Finding all his efforts for restoring his lost country in vain, he voluntarily retired from the service, after the shameful and cowardly pacification of his sovereign; and was compelled to banish himself from his native country. The honorable title of

French citizen was generously and voluntarily conferred on him during his exile, by a solemn decree of the National Assembly of France, in August, 1792. He passed the greater part of the year 1793 at Dresden and Leipsic. While enjoying this solitary retreat, and musing over the fate of his beloved country, all eyes were steadily fixed upon him as the only deliverer of Poland; and after several conferences, secretly held at Warsaw, the patriots, then called insurgents—in search of a leader whose name, head, and heart would inspire confidence—unanimously chose Kosciusko as their chief, and sent two deputies to wait on him.

At the earnest solicitations of his country, he returned to the frontier with a Pole, whose name was revered in Poland, and who went as far as Warsaw to sound the minds of the people, and moderate the chiefs, whose impatience threatened to defeat all their plans of reform. His return to the frontier having roused the suspicions of the *foreign party*, then prevailing in Poland, he feared to hazard the success of the enterprise, and made a journey to Italy, leaving instructions with a few confidential friends to continue the secret negotiations and preparations for a general revolution when circumstances should seem propitious. Having been repeatedly urged by the patriots of Warsaw to return, he went to Poland in February, 1794, and reached the palatinate of Cracow at the moment when the garrison of that town had expelled the Russian troops.

On the 24th of March the citizens of Cracow drew up the act of insurrection, which was signed by three hundred persons. The inhabitants of Cracow had published their declaration of independence, and they had taken up arms under the eyes of their foreign masters, which was generally approved throughout the country by the patriots. Kosciusko was appointed supreme

chief of the national forces, under the title of generalissimo, and had supreme control of the nation in military and civil affairs, as dictator.

He immediately published addresses to the army and people, distinguished for their frankness, simplicity, and wisdom. A few days after his appointment, on receiving news of the approach of the Russian army, he left Cracow at the head of four thousand men, principally peasants, armed with scythes and pikes, without any knowledge of military manœuvres, but courageous and invincible. He met the enemy at Raslawice, on the 4th of April, 1794, where the bloody contest lasted from three in the afternoon to eight in the evening. The Poles gained a complete victory, and took eleven pieces of cannon, with all their baggage and ammunition; while the Russians lost three thousand men, and the remainder threw away in their flight their arms and cartridge-boxes. In the latter part of May following, Kosciusko defeated and entirely destroyed a body of the Russian army, under the command of General Denisow, entrenched in a thick wood on the borders of the Vistula.

A degenerate canon of Cracow had written to General Denisow that he would go to Kosciusko, under the pretext of thanking him in the name of his country for his distinguished services, and embrace this opportunity to assassinate him. The letter of this vile traitor was intercepted, and he suffered the just penalty of his cowardly and perfidious crime by the loss of his head; a circumstance which redoubled the energy of the Poles, and their love and obedience to their distinguished leader.

In the beginning of June, the Prussians and Russians uniting their forces, attacked the Poles with a numerous artillery, in which the latter lost about one thousand killed and wounded. In

this severe engagement, Kosciusko commanded like a great general, and fought like a brave soldier. He immediately published a proclamation, dated at his camp near Kiela, the 10th of June, 1794, relative to the new military system he wished to establish, in which he tried to animate the people to throw off the yoke of slavery, and defend themselves from the unjust invasions of a foreign enemy—earnestly soliciting his absent countrymen to return to their native homes.

In July, Kosciusko's army encamped near Warsaw, encouraged by the victories of the patriots in Courland and Semigalle, attacked the Russians and Prussians, and seized their entrenchments; while the allied army, with its strong reinforcements, approached near the capital, in order to bombard the town and the camp of Kosciusko, which occurred on the 29th, 30th, and 31st of July. The Poles answered by a lively and well-directed fire, which prevented the besiegers from establishing their batteries near enough to throw their bombs into the centre of the town. Kosciusko maintained his position, which enabled him to hold free communication with the adjacent country to victual his troops; while a Polish division in Courland and Semigalle was employed in intercepting the correspondence with Russia. In the meantime a body of Russian troops were beaten at Wilna, in Lithuania, while another Polish army obtained a brilliant victory over the Prussians.

The war of diversion, which had been skilfully planned by the Polish general, was pursued with energy; and some light Polish troops surprised several towns, and made frequent incursions into Silesia. The alarm had become so great, that the garrison of Berlin was sent from that town to Frankfort upon the Oder. Frederic William now had but few able troops in Silesia, Pome-

rania, and Southern Prussia; while his best troops were engaged in their unsuccessful operations before Warsaw. Scarcity and disease were disheartening and desolating the Prussian camp; while Kosciusko's army was flourishing with abundance, health, confidence, order, and discipline. The ladies of all ranks cheered the spirits of the brave Poles, and distributed gold rings with this inscription, "*Our country to her defenders.*" But the events of one day decided the fate of unfortunate Poland; and all the bright laurels won by the defenders of liberty were sadly changed into mournful cypresses in a few hours. Kosciusko's plan of defending the city of Warsaw against the combined arms of Prussia and Russia, displayed the character of a great general; and had his means been in any measure commensurate with his skill, the city would have been saved. The king of Prussia advanced in person at the head of a most formidable army, and proudly threatened the inhabitants with the total destruction of their beautiful city if they persisted in defending it. But after an obstinate and bloody contest of two months, he was obliged to raise the siege, followed by a general assault, in which the patriots triumphed, and returned to Great Poland, where the insurrection had first broken out. Kosciosko immediately sent reinforcements to the points most exposed to the enemy, and went to direct in person the operations in Lithuania, when he learned that the Russians had gained a victory in that province. He returned immediately to Warsaw, to make preparations to meet the enemy, now about to surround him. He resolved, on the 29th of September, 1794, to hazard a battle, for the purpose of preventing the junction of the armies under Fersen and Suwarrow; but his orders, on which the success of his plans depended,

were intercepted by the Russians, and the whole project was defeated.

Kosciusko, without the aid of a division of fifteen thousand which he had expected, sustained the enemy's shock with great vigor, which he repulsed four times. But the Poles were soon surrounded by overwhelming numbers, although their brave general frequently rallied them, and charged at their head in a dress of a Polish peasant, which he always wore in honor of that oppressed people, from the time of the confederation of Cracow. A Cossack who did not know him wounded him with his lance, and unhorsed him. The Poles, at once struck with terror at the fall of their great general, cried out, calling him by name. Kosciusko rose and advanced a few steps, when an officer gave him a severe blow on his head with a sabre, and he fell senseless to the earth. A Russian general, who owed him personal obligations, conveyed him from the field of battle, stanched the gushing gore and bound up his almost mortal wounds, took the greatest care of him, and accompanied him to St. Petersburg, where the Empress Catharine had ordered him to be conducted.

The fall of Kosciusko sealed the fate of Poland. He was detained for two years as a prisoner of war, or rather as a state prisoner, till the death of Catharine, on the 6th of November, 1796. One of the first and most noble acts of the Emperor Paul, the successor of Catharine, was to visit in person—accompanied by his two sons, the Grand Duke Alexander and Constantine—his illustrious captive in his lonely prison. And now comes the time to try his soul—a time when the distinguished greatness of Kosciusko shone out in its meridian splendor. The emperor very kindly offered him his liberty, considerable presents in lands and peasants, dignities, honors, and a high command in

his army. But the noble soul of Washington's friend very modestly and courteously refused the glittering offers of the Russian Czar, honestly saying, that he had never fought except in the cause of human freedom in America and Poland, and he never could serve any other cause. The generous emperor released him on his own terms, with several valuable presents, which Kosciusko concluded to receive as a compliment to his benefactor, but which he afterwards returned from England, with a letter full of gratitude, delicacy, and dignity—determined not to be under any obligations to the absolute monarchy of Russia, the destroyer and plunderer of his home, his once happy land.

Kosciusko, after obtaining his freedom, went from Russia to Sweden, and then to England, where he was treated with great distinction, and thence he proceeded to the United States of America. He arrived at New York in 1797. Congress liberally rewarded his valuable services in the American revolution on the 23d of January, 1798, and gave him the principal and interest of five years' service, amounting to twenty thousand dollars, which constituted the principal part of his fortune at that period. He returned to France in June, 1798, where he was received by the lovers of freedom, with all the enthusiasm and respect which his virtues and character deserved. Here he was highly useful to his adopted country, in forming an indissoluble union between France and the United States.

In the year 1799, the Polish officers employed in the army of Italy presented him the sabre of John Sobieski, found at Nôtre Dame of Lorretto. Kosciusko at first settled himself in Paris, in the family of M. Zeltner, minister of the Swiss confederation, whose moral character resembled his own, and their mutual friendship continued for life. He continued in this family for

fifteen years; and on his return from Vienna, where he went on account of the meeting of the Congress in 1815, he resided at Soleure, in Switzerland, with another M. Zeltner, formerly national prefect of the Canton of Soleure, and brother to his Parisian friend.

When Kosciusko returned to Europe, the French government was at war with the sovereigns who had wrongfully divided Poland, and had forcibly enlisted several thousand Poles under their standard. The Polish hero proposed to the Executive Directory to procure a great many of his countrymen, over whom he still retained great influence, as auxiliaries in the cause of France, provided the French government would stipulate that the independence of Poland should be secured when general peace was restored. It has not been satisfactorily ascertained whether any positive agreement was entered into on this subject; but that such was the understanding between the parties is well known. Kosciusko in good faith fulfilled his part of the engagement, and gave the signal to the Poles, who came in crowds to enroll themselves in the French army. It is well known how the Directory, and afterwards Bonaparte during his consulate and his imperial reign, fulfilled their promises, and what was the deplorable fate of these brave Polish legions, who confidently believed they were fighting for their home and native land, when in truth they were throwing away their valuable lives in the French war, for the mere gratification of French ambition.

He passed fifteen years of his eventful life in the bosom of the Zeltner family, first at Paris and afterwards at Berville, near Fontainbleau, where, like Cincinnatus, he delighted in superintending rural employments, and in the cultivation of his host's estate. Kosciusko, like all other great men, was mild, simple,

and unostentatious in his dress, manners, taste, and language; and devoted his leisure time to reading his favorite authors, Tacitus, Plutarch, Aristides, Timoleon, and Epaminondas. He freely associated and conversed with the peasants, and aided them by his counsels and favors. He greatly admired the character and writings of Jefferson, and frequently speaks of him in his letters as "*his dear Aristides.*" One of his favorite amusements was the instruction of M. Zeltner's daughter in drawing, which was a favorite study of his early youth. He was always ready to serve his friends, and frequently was instrumental in procuring for them lucrative offices. He ever peremptorily refused all the overtures of Bonaparte, to serve in his official staff or otherwise—having no confidence in his faith or ambitious conquests.

In 1814, when all Europe unitedly invaded France, he lived retired in the house of his friend M. Zeltner at Bervill, near Fontainebleau. Out of respect for Kosciusko, his habitation, his person, and the family of his host, were placed under the special protection of Emperor Alexander. When Alexander arrived at Paris with his forces, he immediately sent his carriage for Kosciusko; and on his arrival, cordially embracing him, conversed a long time in the most friendly manner; in which interview Kosciusko earnestly solicited his kindness for Poland in a general amnesty; that he would give them a free constitution similar to England, and establish schools for the education of the peasants. He continued to live in retirement with his friend M. Zeltner, until the fifteenth day of October, 1817, which was reserved by its Creator for the Polish hero to exchange worlds.

The dying moments of Kosciusko was a scene of thrilling interest. His righteous soul, as if voluntarily retiring to rest, weary of life's toils and cares, now plumed itself for heaven, as

the cold and stern hand of death gradually sundered the mortal ties which bound it to earth. His strong and symmetrical hand, which had never drawn a sword but in the cause of human freedom—had never dealt a mortal blow, except at the hearts of tyrants—now gave its last affectionate grasp to surrounding friends, and then folded itself for the last time on the expiring bosom of the brave, palsied in death. That eloquent, innocent tongue, which had never been heard except in the cause of humanity, which had roared at the head of armies like thunder on the distant hills, which had so frequently been heard in the silent watches of midnight, to breathe the devotions of the pious heart which gave it utterance, now like love's soft whisper, sighed its last farewell on earth. That eagle eye, which had formerly thrown its piercing ken over the ranks of advancing hosts, with a far seeing vision which could accurately scan the forces of thousands at a glance, now gives its last look on his friends and all earthly things, with a calmness, a sadness, and heavenly sweetness, that seemed to disarm death of all its terrors; and then quietly turning to heaven, closes on all earthly scenes. The soul and body of this great man, which had acted in concert for the good of the world for seventy-one years, now take their last parting leave, until the morning of the resurrection, then to be reunited in the image of their Maker. While his devoted, weeping friends, gazed anxiously on the gentle heavings of his expiring breast, and a holy quiet reigned around the mourning circle, who sadly watched the last fleeting breath of the expiring hero, as he significantly indicated his last and long farewell to the conflicting hopes and fears of this world,—as the sun, the glorious king of day, gently retires to his quiet repose, and closes his beaming eye in the solemn, but beautiful sunset, so the pure and noble spirit

of Kosciusko gently and serenely retired from this world, and resumed converse with Washington in heaven!

The mortal remains of the republican hero, who began his career under Washington, and ended his days in the birth-place of William Tell, now slumber quietly in Cracow, where his red marble tomb, ornamented with the cap and plume of the Polish peasant, bears the simple inscription, "T. Kosciusko." A splendid monument has lately been erected to his memory, consisting of a mound three hundred feet in height, and two hundred and seventy-five feet in diameter at the base, standing on a rising ground commanding the Vistula. It was erected in 1819 by the voluntary labor of the Poles; and so great was the enthusiasm of the laborers, that wounded soldiers brought earth in their helmets, and ladies carried it in their slippers, as a token of respect for the illustrious dead.*

The character of Kosciusko, so far as human ken can penetrate, was without a defect or blemish. His mind was of a high order, well cultivated and well balanced. To whatever subject he directed his intellectual powers, he was sure to reach a correct conclusion; and his wisdom always led him to select worthy objects, and the best means of obtaining them. His moral powers were every way equal to his mental, and worthy of a truly great man. His benevolence was universal, embracing the high and the low; and his last dollar and his only meal, were the property of the first needy peasant. His reciprocity extended to every favor, every attention; and his love for his race was without a limit. His pure morals, his devoted piety, his patriotism, and love of liberty, were proverbial among all his acquaintances. Such a character could not, and did not fail to command the re-

* Stephens, II., 259.

spect of all. As a general and statesman he had but few equals. His whole character has passed into history, poetry, and song; and surrounded by a halo of immortal fame, which few have ever attained.

"Deep is the sleep of the hero. When shall it
Be morn in the grave, to bid the slumberer
Awake? Thou art swift as a roe on the
Desert. Thy sword in battle as lightning
In the field. Thy voice was like thunder on
The distant hills. Many fell by thy arm.
But when thou didst return from war, how
Peaceful was thy brow. Like the moon in the
Silence of night—calm as the breast of the
Lake, when the loud wind is laid."*

Such are the three great men of Poland. Others, highly distinguished for every kind of human greatness, who are now arching the soil of Poland with their graves, might, with propriety, be grouped around Copernicus, Sobieski, and Kosciusko. But the characters already portrayed will compare with any three which can be selected from any nation; and show conclusively the genius, character, and power of the Polish race, to produce great men, and to advance in human progression.†

* Ossian.

† See Life of Kosciusko, by Mr. M. A. Julien, Museum of Foreign Literature and Science, III., 529; also Falkenstein's Life of Kosciusko.

CHAPTER XII.

FEUDALISM.

Nature and Principles of Feudalism—Its Origin and History—Its General Prevalence in Europe—It never Existed in Poland—The Land Law of Poland.

The feudal system, means that tenure by which the owners of land held their possessions, under an obligation from their tenants, or slaves, to perform military service when required by the chief to whom the allegiance is due. This institution never existed in Poland; and, therefore, the structure of society in this respect differed from other European nations. Whether feudalism, on the whole, has been productive of more good than evil, is a question about which historians, poets, statesmen, and philosophers differ. It has cost France millions of blood and treasure; and its destruction was one of the principal objects of the French revolution during the reign of terror. This peculiar institution of national policy prevailed among the nations of Europe, except Poland, at an early period. Singular as it may seem to modern eyes, it was the general state of society among the ancestors of modern Europe.

We must look for the origin of this institution in a very remote antiquity. Some authors have dated its origin with the kings of

the Franks, who, after the conquest of Gaul, are supposed to have divided their lands among their followers, on the condition of military service. But we must go much farther back in the annals of time, to discover its source. Julius Cæsar found this institution firmly established among the Gaulish nations, before the Christian era. It has its origin in the usages of warlike, barbarous nations, among whom we find a strict subordination of the members of a tribe to their military chief. With the Gauls this subordination was peculiarly strong; and subsisted not only between the soldiers and their commanders, but between the inferior towns or villages and the canton or province, to which they respectively belonged. This feudal relation between soldiers and their commanders, existed among the Franks, the Gauls, the Romans, and other European nations, on substantially the same principles.

The Romans were obliged to maintain fixed garrisons on their frontiers, for the purpose of checking the inroads of the barbarian nations, and to secure their distant conquests. To each officer in those garrisons was assigned a portion of land as the pledge and pay of his service. When the Franks overran Gaul, a great part of the land, found in the hands of the Romans, was held by this tenure; as the remainder was held by the Gauls in the same way. The conquerors, familiar with the feudal policy, would naturally adopt it in the division of their new conquests, and each man, on receiving his dividend of land, was bound to the service of his lord. In the reign of Stephen of England, when the feudal system culminated, more than one thousand castles, with their dependencies, had been erected in the southern part of the island. The paramount law in the minds of these proud and ferocious chieftains, was private retaliation and revenge.

They trampled on the edicts of kings and magistrates. A baron, who considered himself insulted, met his adversary at the head of his vassals, in hostile array, and redressed his wrongs sword in hand. Every freeman or soldier, upon receiving an allotment of the conquered lands, obligated himself to appear in arms against the common enemy, when his feudal lord and leader should call him. This military service was the condition upon which he received his lands, and the tenure by which he continued to hold it. This relation of landlord and tenant was considered honorable, and by no means a degradation or hardship. And the same service which a vassal owed to his lord, was due from the lord to his king.

The feudal law required those among whom the conquered lands were distributed, to repair to the king's standard, with a number of followers, in proportion to the extent of their respective estates, to follow him in his military expeditions. In cases of disobedience, this law could be only enforced by war. Under such a system, the nobles, or barons, enjoyed a subordinate sovereignty in their own domains, holding their vassals or dependents in complete subjection to their will. In times of peace each man cultivated his land, free of taxation, and subject to no other charge than that of military service, required by his chief according to feudal law. When the province was involved in war, each village, though taxed to furnish only a certain number of soldiers, was bound to send on the day appointed for a general muster, all the males capable of bearing arms, from whom the rated number were selected by the chief of the province.

The fiefs were, at first, revocable by the sovereign, and reverted to him on the death of the vassal. But under the imbecile Merovingian kings, the title to fiefs, at length, became independent and

secure, and ripened into hereditary real property, similar to the modern fee. In consequence of the fief becoming hereditary, the land was given out in portions, and the vassal himself, holding his lands of the sovereign by the tenure of military service, was able to create a train of inferior vassals, by giving to them a part of his estate, to be held on the same condition of serving him in health, rendering him homage as their lord, and paying a small annual present as a token of their subjection.

The great fundamental principle on which this singular institution was founded, was self-protection. Such a system enabled the new settlers in a country to secure themselves, not only against the attacks of the inhabitants, whom they had expelled from their farms and possessions, but particularly against the ravages of fresh invaders. But, with all the advantages of the feudal system, unfortunately for the peace of society, it was productive of many evils. It was the natural consequence, in those disorderly semi-barbarous times, when government and law were weak, and of doubtful existence, that the superior, or over lord, should acquire both a civil and criminal jurisdiction over his vassals. Such power, in such hands, in such times, must, of course, have been tyrannical and oppressive. These lords exercised the privilege of coining money, and declaring war against their private enemies. In this situation they soon disdained to consider themselves as subjects; and the consequence was, that the kingdom was soon broken into as many separate principalities as it contained powerful and disobedient nobles; and hence arose innumerable intestine wars, equally disastrous to the national, social, and individual weal.

Every country in Europe was wasted and kept in continual agitation by the feuds of the barons, which gave rise in every

country to vast multitudes of castles and places of strength, erected for the security of despotic chieftains against domestic invasions. The most numerous and useful part of the community—the common people—were no better than slaves; and, though not all chained by the leg, as the Roman slaves were, yet they were transferred from one lord to another, like the cattle and implements of husbandry attached to the soil, which was daily moistened by the sweat and blood of slavery. They were styled *serfs* or *villains*—a cognomen every way indicative of their servitude, degradation, and misery. This state of things so completely depleted the arm of regal authority, that neither the innocent could be protected nor the guilty punished.

A universal anarchy prevailed, coextensive with the feudal policy; the feelings of the people became familiar to violence, blood, despotism, and the most cruel injustice; intellectual and moral improvement ceased; the lights of science, religion, and government continued to glimmer more dimly in their sockets, until the ruthless hand of feudal barbarism extinguished the last ray of the dying tapers, to be lighted up again at the dawn from the dark ages, by the hands of modern reform.

History has recorded no period in the annals of Europe so replete with the most atrocious actions, as that which intervened from the seventh to the eleventh century—the era of the prevalence of the feudal system. At the commencement of the twelfth century, a happier day began to dawn—the misery of the people began to mitigate, and government, law, civilisation, and morals began to exert their legitimate influence over man. Chivalry produced a propitious effect, and a great variety of causes modified and checked the ferocity and licentiousness of the barons. No one of these ameliorating causes was, perhaps,

more salutary than the establishment of standing armies in the fifteenth century. The hands of royalty seised this powerful engine, and wielded it with such herculean power, as to crush the strength and obstinacy of the nobles, and, finally, reduced them to order and obedience.

The first monarch who made these invasions on the rebellious nobles, was Charles VII., of France, in the year 1445. But the struggle with feudalism was so severe that it required the greatest boldness to gain the victory; and Charles was the monarch to do it. He retained a powerful army in his service, and appropriated funds for their support. The principal nobility soon repaired to his standard, and the feudal militia, who were only occasionally in the field, were soon disregarded by regular soldiers. Henry VII., of England, followed the worthy example of Charles; and other monarchs imitated their example, until a day of government, law, and order was generally hailed in Europe, and the horrors of the feudal system ceased to prey on the vitals of the body politic.

Such is the history and nature of the feudal policy which, for centuries, ravaged Europe, with the exception of Poland. And after all the praise which has been lavished on the feudal policy by poets, philosophers, and historians—and after all due allowances for any temporary advantages which may have resulted from it in a semi-barbarous age, we are constrained to congratulate Poland, that she has lived and died without drinking its bitter dregs. Their government, though full of faults, never suffered for the want of this most miserable ingredient.

Although the feudal law of Europe never prevailed in Poland, yet their system of land-law was founded on principles more injurious to the public welfare, and far more destructive to the individual happiness of the people, than the feudal system of the

neighboring nations. The only landholders were the kings, the nobles, and a few privileged foreigners. Those who owned a house and a few acres of land, could enjoy all the privileges of nobility; and the peasantry and commercial class were interdicted by the Diet in 1496, from becoming proprietors of land, or possessors of church preferment. The barons and nobles, from early time, generally possessed immense tracts of land, which were divided among them in their military conquests, and were partially and poorly cultivated by their slaves. These servile, miserable tenants, ignorant of agriculture and commerce, in the absence of their lords, who were generally engaged in foreign wars, wandered over the immense territories of their masters, cultivating large and unfenced fields for a short season, and then abandoned them for other lands supposed to be more fertile, and requiring less labor. This state of husbandry, of course, was unfavorable to the soil, and unproductive to the owner. There being no intermediate class of yeomanry between the nobles and the slaves, such a system of land-law would operate prejudicially to the interests of both. It seems to be essential to the stability and prosperity of any government, that every citizen and subject should have an allodial fee or permanent interest in the soil; or, at least, should have the right of owning lands according to his means. These principles of land-law, are the ligaments which bind together the body politic by the strongest of all ties—self-interest. And every government, ancient and modern, has flourished or decayed in proportion as the people have been protected in their free enjoyment of equal rights of prosperity.*

* Fletcher, 52, 53; Sullivan's Lectures on Feudalism; Guizot, III., 359; Guizot, IV., Lectures, 6—11; Guizot, I., Lecture 4; Alison, I., 349.

CHAPTER XIII.

GOVERNMENT.

General Principles of Government—Different Forms of Government—Self-government—Centralization of Government—Rights of the People—Government of Poland previous to the reign of the Piasts—The Government of Poland during the reign o the Piasts—The Government under the Jagellons—Government of the Elective Kings—The Present Government of Poland.

SECTION I.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF GOVERNMENT.

GOVERNMENT is that control which is exercised over the actions of men, as individuals, societies, communities, or states, for the mutual benefit of the human family. When applied to states, it controls the administration of public affairs, according to the principles of an established constitution, known as the fundamental law of the nation—aided, explained, and enforced by a code of written laws, or by long-established and well-known usages and customs; founded on the settled principles of right and wrong, called the common law; or it may be administered, as in some countries, by the arbitrary edicts of the sovereign.

Government, in its nature, is that order among rational creatures, which is regarded as heaven's first law; and produces or

contributes to all the benefits of individual, social, and national existence. A nation is like a large family, where all the inhabitants are related in one and the same common interest, and in harmony with their individual interests; where all are connected in feeling and blood, and amenable to the same supreme power and government, which acts as the common parent of every individual.

The necessity of government is found in the nature and constitution of man. Without the controlling power and salutary restraints of government, founded on just and useful laws; interest and selfishness, the nursery of all vices, would be the dominant principle of every man's actions, regardless of the rights of others. It is necessary, therefore, to have some restraint imposed upon every man; some power which shall direct and restrain his actions; impelling him to what is right and deterring him from what is wrong; and the only power which can do this is government. Hence, it is both the natural and moral duty of every one, to cheerfully and quietly submit to all just and useful restraints; and surrender to the general government, in common with all others, so much of his natural rights as may be necessary for its support and the general good of all. Such a partial surrender of human rights to the general government, instead of being a sacrifice, is a positive advantage; so long as the concession is made for the common weal and mutual protection of all who participate in the government. With the exception of those powers and rights which are thus surrendered to government, every man is his own governor, and independent sovereign; and is at liberty to act as he pleases, subject only to the government of his Divine Sovereign.

The necessity for government is so intimately connected with

the constitution, wants, and happiness of man, that we find it has existed in all ages of the world in some form; and the same principle pervades the whole human family at the present day. In every part of the world inhabited by human beings, however savage or civilized, they all have their kings, rulers, or chiefs, under some form of government. Nor is this all-pervading law restricted to the human family; but extends through all creation, animate and inanimate, mortal and immortal. That order, which is said to be the first law of heaven, is worthy of universal dominion among the human race. Man, having been created a social being, cannot live alone; and society is, therefore, his natural state of existence; and government is the controlling principle of civil society.

Every government is dependent for its stability on the self-government of each subject—the army and navy—government patronage—decentralization or its universal prevalence among the people—and the patriotism of the masses. It is the duty and privilege of each citizen to govern himself with justice and propriety, subject to, and in conformity with, those rights which he has voluntarily surrendered to the general government; and, where self-government prevails in its purity, the business of state government is secure and easy. The great rule of self-government is, to govern ourselves so as to secure the greatest amount of happiness during our entire existence in time and eternity, regardless of all temporary enjoyments which conflict with this principle; and this rule is complied with only when we obey the will of God. Self-government is the principal distinguishing feature between savage and civilized nations. Where citizens govern themselves with propriety, very little remains for the general government to do; except to carry on the ordinary affairs committed

to the trust of the rulers. Self-government embraces all the elementary principles of national government; and the latter is founded on the former, and cannot long exist without it. The analogy between the will, the intellectual powers, the conscience and moral feelings of the individual on the one hand—and the sovereignty or executive power, the legislative, the judicial and the fraternal powers of the national government on the other, are so clear as to leave no doubt of their intimate and indispensable connection. The decentralization of government so as to diffuse its privileges and responsibilities equally through all the provinces and parts of the nation, has always been a *desideratum* in political science, and never attained, except in England and America. In the United States, this principle universally prevails more completely than in any other nation ancient or modern; and England ranks next in this particular. The great evil of concentrating the entire government in the hands of the few at the capital of the country, has always been severely felt in ancient as well as modern nations; and has always been one of the most fatal rocks on which nations have been wrecked. It was highly ruinous in Greece, Rome, and Poland; and has ever been the great bone of contention between urban and rural society. It has cost France centuries of war and millions of treasure; and is still the great obstacle which that nation has to surmount in its march of democracy. Russia relies solely on her powerful army and liberal government patronage; without the self-government or patriotism of her subjects. The Polish government most unfortunately was destitute of self-government, patriotism, decentralization, or a powerful army—except temporarily under the most skilful generals—while her government patronage was the exclusive property of the nobility.

If we would profit by the national catastrophe of Poland, we must carefully investigate the causes which conspired to produce these disastrous effects; among which is their defective government. In order to understand the Polish government, its nature, principles, and effects, it may be necessary to sketch briefly the leading features of a sound government, containing that system or power by which the laws of a country are made and executed. Although the forms of government, including ancient and modern nations, are nominally numerous, yet, in reality, they may all be reduced to six general classes: 1, Patriarchal government; 2, Monarchy; 3, Aristocracy; 4, Democracy; 5, Theocracy; and, 6, Stratocracy.

The patriarchal form of government, and, probably, the first that existed, prevailed in Asia in the days of Abraham, and is in substance found in the tents of the Arabian sheiks at the present day. It is adopted generally among the American Indians, and other savage nations, as administered by their patriarchs or chiefs, who are elected to office on account of their bravery, wisdom, and experience, and generally called "independent chiefs," as among the North American Indians and the Eastern Arabians. There are two kinds of monarchy, absolute and limited. An absolute monarchy is a government in which the *will* of the monarch is the only law, as in Russia. A limited monarchy is a government in which the power of the sovereign is limited by law, as in England. An aristocracy is a government administered by a few men, usually styled the nobility. A democratic, or republican government, is that in which the people choose their own rulers, and all are governed by all, through the medium of a democratic, elective representation, based on liberty, equality, reciprocity, and law, as in the United States. A theocracy is a government under the

immediate supervision of the Supreme Being, as the government of the Jews under Moses. A stratocracy is a military government, as that of the Cossacks. The chief excellence of a good government depends more on the fundamental principles by which it is conducted, than on its form. Every government, whatever form it may assume, may have some useful principles; and, the more perfect the principles, the better the government. Of all the forms of government known in history, that of the United States is the best, and England is the next.

Government is a divine institution, and designed for the good of the governed. That government is the best which secures the greatest good to the greatest number, individually and collectively, all things considered. It is the duty of the supreme national power to give to each and all its subjects the greatest democracy consistent with the general and individual weal. A sound democratic government is founded on liberty, equality, fraternity, reciprocity, benevolence, law, literature, morality, and religion. It must be free from powerful monopolies and aristocratic establishments, a plain, useful, unostentatious system, void of titles of nobility, pomp, and extravagance, securing equal political rights and protection to all, and partial favors to none. Every citizen is entitled to equal rights of property, life, liberty, character, education, government, law, and religion. Church and State should be independent of each other, yet friendly; and, like twin sisters, go hand in hand, affording mutual aid and assistance to each other. Government should be adapted to the capacities and wants of the people, ever progressing and advancing from one degree of development to another, until both attain perfection. The greatest liberty and the least restraint, consistent with the greatest good of the whole—not to govern too much, and yet enough—are the funda-

mental principles in every wise administration. Its object is to make the people happy, wise, powerful, and wealthy; and every facility for physical, intellectual, moral, and national progression should be furnished by government, which the people cannot provide for themselves. And when administered in good faith, wisdom, and utility, it never fails to produce these beneficial results.

The power and labor of administering the government should be wisely divided and balanced between the people, the executive, the legislative, and the judiciary.

All men are by nature free, equal, and independent; having certain inalienable rights, among which are those of enjoying and defending life and liberty, acquiring and possessing property, and pursuing their own interest and happiness. All political power is inherent in the people; and government is instituted for their protection, security, and benefit; and they have the right to alter or reform the same, according to law, whenever the public good may require it. The right of trial by jury,—a representative government, chosen by the free suffrage of every qualified male citizen, by annual elections, or within such deferred periods as may best secure the public interest, in which the rights of all may be fully and equally represented,—the right of petition,—wise, equal, and just laws,—competent, honest, and effective officers,—a learned, worthy, and effective judiciary,—a constitution, settling all the fundamental principles of government, public policy, and laws,—a full and complete code of rights, and remedial law,—the free exercise and enjoyment of religion, without religious tests or religious qualifications, provided that the liberty of conscience thus secured shall not be so construed as to excuse licentiousness, or justify acts inconsistent with the peace, safety, and general weal

of the state and the people,—are all inalienable human rights. The privilege of the writ of *habeas corpus* should extend to all cases of *illegal imprisonment*, and should never be suspended, except in cases of rebellion, invasion, or war, when the public safety requires it. It is the right of the governed to be protected from excessive bail and unreasonable fines, as well as from cruel and inhuman punishments. No member of the state should be disfranchised, or deprived of any of the rights or privileges secured to any citizen, except by the law of the land, or the judgment of his peers. No person should be held to answer for a capital, or otherwise infamous crime—except in cases of impeachment, and in cases of militia when in actual service, and the land and naval forces in time of war, or which the state may keep in time of peace, and in cases of petit larceny under the regulation of the legislature—unless on presentment or indictment of a grand jury; and no person should be indicted until he has had a full and fair hearing; and, in every trial, in all courts, the party accused should be allowed to appear and defend in person, or with counsel, as in civil cases. No citizen should be twice put in jeopardy for the same offence, nor compelled, in any criminal case, to be a witness against himself; nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without legal process of law; nor should private property be taken for public use, without just compensation. The interests of the domestic relations so far overbalance the trifling pecuniary rights of creditors, as to require a sufficient amount of property, personal and real, for the necessary use of the family, with economy and reasonable industry, to be protected by law from execution, including a comfortable homestead; and the property of married women should be secured from the debts of the husband. Every citizen has the natural right to freely

speak, write, and publish his sentiments on all subjects, being responsible for its abuse; and the freedom of speech and of the press should be subjected to no other legal restraints. The people, in their right of sovereignty, possess the original and ultimate property in all lands within the jurisdiction of the state; and all lands, the title to which shall fail from a defect of heirs, revert or escheat to the people. All lands should be allodial, and free from feudal tenures; so that, subject only to the liability to escheat, the entire and absolute property is vested in the owners, according to the nature of their respective estates. To these rights of the people may be added the following: No bill of attainder, or *ex post facto* law, should be passed; no title of nobility granted; no law impairing the obligation of previous contracts should exist; soldiers should not be quartered in their houses in time of peace, without their consent, nor in time of war, unless authorized by law; they are entitled to security in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, and no warrants should issue but upon probable cause, supported by oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized. All powers, not delegated by law to the general government, belong to the people; and it is their right freely and peaceably to assemble together, to consult for the common good, to instruct their representatives, to amend their constitution, or make a new one, and petition the legislature for redress of grievances. All laws of a general nature should have a uniform bearing and operation on all the governed. That relict of ancient barbarity, imprisonment for debt, should never exist among a free people. Foreigners, who are in good faith residents of the state, are entitled to the same rights of possession, enjoyment, and inheritance of property, as native-born citizens.

Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, unless for the punishment of crime, should be tolerated by government. Treason against the state consists only in levying war against it, adhering to its enemies, or giving them aid and comfort; and no person should be convicted of treason, unless on the evidence of two witnesses to some overt act or confession, in open court. Every citizen is liable to be taxed, according to his property, for the support of government, besides duties, imposts, and the government funds. When the government becomes so corrupt, imbecile, or defective, as to be useless, the people may, as a last resort, revolutionize, and form a new one. Such a bill of rights is the natural and inalienable property and inheritance of a free people, and should remain inviolate for ever.

The powers and duties of government should be so divided and balanced between the executive, the legislative, and judicial departments, as to prevent each from having an undue ascendency; and afford mutual aid and protection to each department, forming one united whole. The national legislature, or congress, should be divided between the assembly and senate, independent of each other, with a veto power lodged in the hands of the executive, except such laws as may be passed by a majority of two thirds. The government is bound to a faithful observance of the laws of nations and national treaties,—to maintain a friendly intercourse with all powers, as far as possible, without a sacrifice of national honor and principle,—to maintain peace and abstain from war, except as a necessary and last resort for self-defence, and the protection of national rights,—and secure to the people a sound republican form of government, administered in good faith. The legislative power of the state should be vested in a senate and assembly, elected annually by the people, or at such deferred

periods and in such classification as will best promote the public good, duly and equally apportioned among the inhabitants, in such districts as to secure to all a full and fair representation. The supreme executive power belongs to the governor, chief magistrate, or president of the nation,—elected from the citizens by the people on general ticket, for a period not less than two nor more than four years,—distinguished for his talents, learning, and integrity. A sufficient number of other worthy and competent officers should be chosen by the people, to carry out and execute the government in all its departments. The foundation of every well-organized government is a pure and able judiciary, sufficiently numerous to bring justice home to the doors of every citizen and subject, with reasonable expense and dispatch. It is the duty of the national power to sustain the educational interests of the people; provide an efficient army and navy, and organise and support the militia; regulate commerce with foreign nations; to levy and collect taxes, duties, imposts, and excise; to pay the government debts, and provide for the common defence and general welfare of the people; establish uniform rules of naturalization and bankruptcy; coin money, and regulate the value thereof; fix the standard of weights and measures; provide laws for the prevention and punishment of crimes and misdemeanors; establish post offices and post roads; to promote civilization, the arts, sciences, and literature; to secure to authors and inventors the exclusive right to their writings and discoveries, and provide international copy-right laws for the protection of foreign authors, and thereby protect those at home; to declare war; grant letters of marque and reprisal, and make laws concerning captures on land and water; to raise and support armies; provide and maintain a navy; to execute the laws; suppress insurrection and repel

invasion; and make all laws necessary to carry on and support the government in the best manner. No money should be drawn from the treasury without appropriation made by law. The military power must be subservient to the civil power. No standing army should be kept in time of peace, and, in time of war, no appropriation for a standing army should be made for a longer time than two years. A plurality vote must control, and the majority and minority should regulate their intercourse by the principles of mutual forbearance and reciprocal concession. A judicious tariff, sufficient for the necessary protection of home industry and the expenses of government, is one of the first of national duties.

The indispensable means of government are moral suasion, legal coercion, military force, and wealth. The principal means of carrying on and maintaining a sound republican government, among a free, democratic people, is moral suasion, based upon the education and evangelical religion of the masses. Three fourths of the people in the United States are governed and controlled by this great moral power. Where moral suasion ends, legal coercion begins, and military force again follows in its turn. The former power is designed for the government of all; the two latter for the rebellious few.

Such is the *Magna Charta*, the constitution and laws of every well-organized government. And conformity, or non-conformity to these first principles, must ultimately decide the fate of every nation. The government of the American Union and the States contain these principles, and is unquestionably the best and most perfect government on earth. England contains most of them, and ranks next. France, under her new Constitution, has adopted many of them; and all ancient and modern nations have

flourished or perished by obeying or violating these elementary laws of their national being. Russia, Turkey, Africa, and, in fact, all modern nations, are gradually incorporating more or less of them into their government, laws, and institutions; and their progression and development are graduated accordingly. These laws of national existence, when compared with the government, history, and fall of Poland, furnish us with ample data to explain all the misfortunes of this unfortunate republic. But very few, if any, of these fundamental principles of a sound, healthy government can be found in her history. It would seem, government was what heaven denied them; and the world has done the same. With these general principles of government as our standard, we may, with better hopes of success, now advance to the study of Polish government.

Section II.

POLISH GOVERNMENT.

In describing the government of Poland, it will be necessary to examine its history, its principles, and its effects. Previous to the reign of Piast, which commenced early in the ninth century, the government of Poland was patriarchal, and resembled other patriarchal governments of ancient and modern times. Poland, for many centuries, was governed by an elective chief, under the title of duke, or general; but no regular dynasty was established until the accession and election of Piast in 840 A. D., or, as some reckon, in 830, which was accomplished with great difficulty. The government of the dukes and military chiefs of the north, like the more ancient patriarchs of Asia, Africa, and America,

is substantially the same as an absolute monarchy, where the will of the sovereign is the sole and absolute law, by which the government is administered with the power of life and death over the subjects.

The elevation of Piast to the throne changed the government of Poland from a patriarchal to an absolute monarchy. The power of the sovereign was controlled by his own will and the fear of his barons; who, in fact, generally ruled the kings of Poland. The reign of Piast introduced a new element into the government, by the cultivation of peace instead of war, which continued for thirty years: a period of quiet and repose never enjoyed by the nation before or since. In that early day, and among a barbarous people, which had been continually accustomed, for time immemorial, to the predatory wars of the nomad tribes, under their despotic military chiefs, it must have required a high order of talent to maintain peace and harmony among such a nation, for a period of thirty years. Yet such was the reign of Piast, whose government has ever been revered by the Poles, as the halcyon days of their history. The statesman may learn an important lesson from this reign—that men, even in a savage state, can be governed by mild means and moral suasion much better than by military force; and human nature, in its rudest state, is capable of appreciating a wise and benevolent government. Piast was a kind, humane sovereign, always consulting the good of his people, and never abused his power. And it would seem, that at this early day the Poles were capable of being governed by wise laws and moral principle, when judiciously administered. Nor were they insensible to the benevolence of Piast before and after his election; and even the hospitalities of his scanty table, and his general kindness before and

during his reign, were reciprocated by his barbarous subjects with love and obedience. The same principle may be traced in the history of all governments, in all nations, ancient and modern; and had the same money, talent, and labor been vested and expended in governing men by moral suasion, founded on education, benevolence, reciprocity, even-handed justice, mutual forbearance, and reciprocal concession, and the general good, which have been wasted in aggressive war—this world, instead of being a theatre of strife and human butchery for six thousand years, would now be enjoying its millennial glory, where human rights would be universally respected and enjoyed.

The introduction of Christianity, in the reign of Mieczylas I., in A. D. 964, forms an important era in the government of Poland. This prince seems to have inherited the mantle of peace, which so gracefully adorned Piast, his illustrious ancestor and royal predecessor. The introduction of Christianity, and the abolition of heathen idolatry, always form an important crisis in the history of nations. Generally, no change is more exciting, and attended with more serious consequences, than a radical reformation from heathenism to Christianity. And yet the Poles submitted to this important improvement, introduced by Mieczylas, without resistance; another remarkable instance of their natural capacity to be governed by reason and judgment, under the administration of wise and discreet rulers. So rapid was their progress in the school of Christianity, that during the reign of this sovereign, which continued for thirty-five years, their zeal for the new faith was so ardent, that when any portion of the gospel was read, the hearers half-drew their swords, to testify their readiness to defend its principles. The history of the Polish government, in the reign of Mieczylas I., which has been

most favorably written by the monks, has not escaped the criticisms of other religious sects; but the impartial historian has no hesitation in striking the balance decidedly in favor of the Polish records, which describe this reign as a great improvement in their government.*

During the reign of Boleslas III., from 1103 to 1139, the government organized the militia or *pospolite* of Poland; an important improvement in the affairs of the nation, and would have been far more useful if it had been properly sustained by the subsequent sovereigns. Monopoly is equally odious in war and peace. Every qualified citizen should be permitted and required to bear arms in the defence of his country; and a democratic militia well-regulated and commanded, where every soldier has free and equal access to fame according to his deeds and merits, is one of the first principles of every sound and successful government. The militia system of the American States is the best military organization in the world, as the late wars with England and Mexico clearly prove.†

In the reign of Boleslas IV., which continued from A. D. 1139 to 1173, his government adopted the dangerous principle of converting their heathen neighbors to Christianity by means of the sword; a ruinous policy, as the history of religion conclusively proves. They first tried the experiment on their northern neighbors, the Prussians, who were degraded idolators, and at first met with apparent success; but at length the Polish troops were defeated, and the enterprise met with a signal failure. Christianity has never been dependent on war for its converts; and ever since the sword of Peter received the stern rebuke of the Saviour in the Garden of Gethsemane, his true apostles and

* Fletcher, 19, 20. † Fletcher, 32.

ministers have relied on the "sword of the spirit," for success. These religious crusades cost Poland, in common with all Europe who embarked in them, millions of precious lives and valuable treasures, while Christianity blushed at the impiety, and wept for the injuries received from pretended, but deluded friends.*

The government, not satisfied with fighting their enemies in self-defence, and in aggressive wars, adopted the ruinous policy of fighting the battles of other nations merely for the asking. This folly prevailed as early as the reign of Boleslas II., and continued until the death of John Sobieski. No nation can long exist under the depleting power of war, which always produces anarchy and confusion, poverty and distress, desolation and ruin. If a state be so fortunate as to escape from civil war, except as a means of self-defence, the government should rejoice and be content; without superadding the crime of making merchandise of invasive war. This propensity of mingling in the quarrels of foreign nations, in violation of good faith and national treaties, was seized as a pretext for annihilating the Polish government, by Russia, Austria, and Prussia, who had each in their turn received the aid of Polish arms in times of adversity. No principle of government is better settled, than rigorous neutrality in relation to the wars of foreign nations; and Poland learned this lesson by sad experience.†

The reign of Casimir II., commencing 1178, furnishes another remarkable instance in the history of Poland, of the capacity of the Poles for a rational and free government, when administered by a mild, wise, and discreet sovereign. Casimir soothed the spirit of war, ruled his subjects with great liberality and human-

* Fletcher, 33, 73. † Fletcher, 80.

ity, and endeared himself to his people by his benevolence and justice.

With the reign of Casimir III. in 1333, commenced a new era in the government of Poland. Thus far Poland had been governed for nearly thirteen centuries—including the early patriarchal government of the nomad tribes—without written law either in the form of a constitution, code, or otherwise. The only laws which regulated the government, were precedents, opinions, and passions, dictated by the interest of the sovereign, and his most powerful nobles; which existed in a confused mass, until Casimir the Great, the Polish Justinian, first reduced them to a formal, though imperfect code. His predecessor had convoked an assembly of the bishops and barons at Chenciny, in the same year of his death, to revise the laws; but the work remained unfinished, and, ten years after, Casimir called a diet at Wislica, after separate meetings had been held in Great and Little Poland, to draw up sketches of the proposed reform; from which the famous code of Wislica was compiled. For this important work, the sovereign received the flattering title—"*The King of the Serfs.*"*

But, the government of Poland seemed only like a deceitful phantom, which, after beckoning them on through so many centuries of toil and war, diversified with alternate prosperity and adversity, vanished the moment they attempted to grasp it. The sunny days of Casimir's reign were soon clouded by the stormy administration of his successor, Louis, king of Hungary. The election of a foreign prince to the throne was a disastrous event in the history of Poland; from which the government never recovered. The unwise policy of choosing sovereigns, rulers, and

* Fletcher, 35, 38.

public officers, from foreign nations, has ruined more nations than Poland; and has long since been repudiated by modern governments. This fatal step of setting up the crown of Poland as a prize for foreign ambition, introduced those brutal strifes and factions of the nobility, which paved the way for the final conquest of the nation. The chief ruler of a nation should always be a native-born citizen, and this principle has become a cardinal rule in all well regulated governments.*

The wary Poles, as if conscious of the sacrifice they were about to make, by the coronation of a foreign king, remodelled and enlarged the coronation oath, or *pacta conventa*, which had existed nominally for centuries; but was generally violated by their sovereigns. Fearing the consequences of the dangerous course they were pursuing, in changing the government from the hands of Polish citizens, to foreign rulers, they required Louis to resign all right to the royal domains—or nearly all—and confer them on his officers or *starostas*, as benefices, whom he had no right to remove, without the consent of the senate or assembly of nobles; to require no personal service, to impose no taxes, or wage war without their consent, nor interfere with the authority of the lords over their serfs. These restrictions reduced the power of the king to a constitutional monarchy, very similar to England; and, had they been faithfully observed by the crown, would have been an improvement in the government of Poland. But they were soon disregarded by Louis, who continued his residence in Hungary, and filled all the principal offices with Hungarians, regardless of his solemn vows and coronation oath.†

The death of Louis, in 1383, terminated the government of the Piasts. During their administration of 552 years, they laid

* Fletcher, 41, 60, 61. † Idem. 41.

the foundations of all the most important Polish institutions, their laws, Diets, and orders, and their political, religious, and literary institutions.

The government of the Jagellons, which commenced in 1384, like the previous dynasty of the Piasts, introduced some valuable changes, while others proved ruinous. The annexation of Lithuania to Poland under one government was an unfortunate policy for both nations. Their character, manners, religion, laws, governments, and institutions, were so different and repugnant to each other, that no common interest, sufficiently strong to unite them harmoniously, could ever be created; and therefore the two provinces always entertained the worst jealousies, founded on their opposite interests and feelings. The annexation of new provinces is a dangerous policy, where the inhabitants and their institutions are so different and hostile as to endanger the peace and safety of the union. No nation can wisely extend its government over more territory than can be governed harmoniously by the same laws and institutions. All the fallen nations of antiquity were wrecked on this fatal rock; and modern governments may profit by shunning their pernicious example. Had Greece and Rome confined their governments to such provinces and subjects as cherished their laws, and avoided their foreign aggressive conquests, which ultimately ruined them by treason and revolt, they might be flourishing republics, even at the present day. The Cossacks and Lithuanians never benefited Poland; both proved to be unprofitable and ruinous acquisitions.

The government under Casimir IV. forms a bright period in the history of Poland. In the year 1467, the Polish Diet or Parliament was organized. Previous to this period, the senate consisted only of the bishops and principal officers of the kingdom,

as established by Boleslas I., in the eleventh century. Wladislas first assembled his nobles in a Diet in 1331, and Casimir, his successor, followed his example. The assemblies were composed of different orders, formed by the king, on the principle of balancing power between the *aristocracy*—embracing the most influential nobles—and the numerous barons, who possessed the title of noblemen, but in fact constituted a separate interest, and were considered the *democracy*. The Diets previous to Casimir IV., had been general assemblies of all the nobles, comprising the army; but these numerous and unmanageable meetings, of more than one hundred thousand horsemen, induced the Poles to attempt the representative system of Europe. The Poles had long been familiar with their Dietines or *colloquia*, which had been held by each of their palatines in their palatinates, for the administration of justice; and necessity, the mother of invention, had taught them to manage their public business by deputies; and in the course of time the districts generally adopted the principle; until in 1468, they sent two deputies for each district to the General Diet. The representative system, however, ultimately failed—as we have had occasion before to remark—in consequence of the jealousies and party feuds of the ambitious nobles.*

The senate consisted of the ministers of state, the representatives of the clergy, the palatines, and castellons, making one hundred and forty-nine members, until 1767, when four new members were added to represent Lithuania. The senators, except the clergy, were nominated by the king, and continued in office for life. It was the duty of the senate to preside over the laws, to act as the guardians of liberty, protect justice and

* Edinburgh Encyclopedia, Art. Poland. Fletcher, 42, 49, 50.

equity, and, jointly with the king, to ratify the laws made by the nobility.

The Diet consisted of the king, the senators, and deputies chosen from the provinces and towns, amounting to four hundred. Previous to the organisation of the Diet, the government was merely an absolute monarchy. But now the king could do nothing without the unanimous consent of the Diet; nor could any law be passed. A Diet could not be formed without the senate and assembly. A portion of the senate acted as a committee to assist the assembly in the transaction of their business. The president of the senate was the archbishop of Gnesne, who, during any interregnum, performed the duties of the king, and presided at the elections of the sovereign. Before the king elect was proclaimed as the king of Poland, he was required to sign and swear to the *pacta conventa*—the Polish constitution—which contained the conditions on which he received the crown, while kneeling in the most reverent and humble posture.*

The prevalence of domestic wars, duels, and riots, as the means of settling questions of politics, judicial rights, and family feuds, was a familiar principle in the Polish government, which seldom met with reproof from any quarter, and was one of the most influential causes in the fall of Poland. A government which fails to maintain peace and quiet at home, is worse than useless, and should be abandoned or corrected at once.

The union of Church and State was a fundamental principle of their government, and was productive of its usual evils. The government of Poland was always under the control of their dominant religion. Previous to the introduction of Christianity, their government was the creature of heathen superstition. After

* Edinburgh Encyclopædia, Art. Poland.

the introduction of Christianity, the sceptre passed into the hands of the Pope, who ever after wielded it in favor of the Church, at the expense of the State. The papal religion of the middle ages, as a national religion, and particularly in Poland, was unfavorable to liberty and sound progressive government. The independence of Church and State, in their separate and legitimate spheres of usefulness, and yet mutually dependent on those principles of government where both meet on common ground, harmonising in good faith, and mutually aiding each other in the great work of human liberty and moral reform, was never understood by the Pope; but was reserved for the discovery of Luther, and to be demonstrated by actual experiment in America.

It is due to Poland to give her government credit for religious toleration, during the persecutions of the Reformation in Europe; although it is to be regretted that this account was subsequently more than balanced by the religious wars and persecutions, which contributed their full share in the overthrow of the government, and were used as a pretext for dismembering the nation by Russia, Austria, and Prussia, who mutually encouraged the Catholics and Protestants in their quarrels, for the unworthy purpose of reaping the fruits of their ruin.

The brightest page in the history of Poland's government is the liberty of the press. This unfortunate country is justly entitled to the credit of establishing the first free press known in the records of nations. Although envy has frequently tried to filch this brightest jewel from her crown, yet to Poland, and to Poland alone, is the world indebted for the discovery of that most important principle in all sound governments, *the freedom of the press*. The American government borrowed this institution from Poland, and adopted it in its improved form as a corner-stone of the

American Union. This most valuable of all political institutions, when contemplated in its various points of usefulness, is sufficient to immortalize Poland in the heart of every freeman. When all Europe had either silenced or shackled the press—even England not excepted—for the purpose of defeating the Reformation, and crushing religious and civil liberty in its bud, the persecuted followers of the great reformer found a secure retreat in the plains of Sarmatia, where all enjoyed freedom of thought, freedom of speech, and freedom of the press. Here in this asylum of liberty the reformers of religion, of literature, government, and law, all published their doctrines freely, and sent forth their tracts, treatises, translations, and reform publications, which were the principal means of spreading the great work of human improvement throughout Europe and America.*

The great and unlimited power of the nobility was one of the most odious and destructive features in their government. This monster continued its slow progressive growth through more than seventeen centuries, until the crown, the people, the government, and all their useful institutions were swallowed and devoured by its rapacious maw. And here we may see the importance of so balancing the power of government, as to prevent the supreme ascendency of any of its departments, and preserve the harmonious and mutual dependence of all. Here the government of Poland was defective, and here we find ample cause of its final ruin.

The union and identity of the army and government was an unfortunate principle. The same fatal policy ruined all the fallen nations of antiquity; and finally dethroned and exiled the French emperor, whose sagacity overlooked the hidden dangers of uniting

* Fletcher, 58.

the sword and purse. The restriction of the Polish army to the nobility exclusively, and the ascendency of the nobility over the crown and the people, placed the government at the mercy of a corrupt aristocracy, whose unlimited power finally trampled on the rights of the people. The American and British government wisely remedied this evil, by dividing and balancing this power in the hands of the several departments of the government, who are responsible to the people.

The government of the Jagellons, which closed with the death of Sigismund, in 1572, after a continuance of one hundred and eighty-six years, witnessed the principal growth of the dimensions, government, and institutions of Poland. All attempts to raise up a third order, which might neutralize and soften the asperities of the crown and nobles, failed; and the only alternative was to make the government a perfect despotism, as in Russia or Turkey, as a protection to the regal authority. This experiment of a despotism was afterwards tried by subsequent sovereigns, but without any better success. The kings who undertook it were so deficient in genius and perseverance, that the aristocracy who composed the army, the diet, the confederacy, the wealth, the people, and the government of Poland, were invincible in all their measures, and gradually filched from the crown jewel after jewel, until it became a simple badge of official distinction; while the king was little more than an itinerant judge, and the nation a republic of titled, invidious aristocrats.

The successive reigns of the elective kings, with the exception of Sobieski, were so many games of hazard between the sovereigns and nobles, in which the gamesters alternately won and lost, until all parties became bankrupt, and finally sold their country to their brokers, Russia, Austria, and Prussia, to pay their bills.

With Sobieski, Polish freedom and government expired. The subsequent kings were elected without any other suffrages than Russian sabres and German bribes; while the voice of Polish patriotism was silenced by the solitude of prisons and graves; and Polish reason was controlled by the arguments of Russian cannon. The successors of Sobieski—Augustus II., Stanislas Leszczynski, and Stanislas Poniatowski—were the creatures of Russian ambition, and not the kings of Poland.

The government of Sobieski forms the brightest period in the history of the elective monarchs. His greatness arrested the waning fortunes of his country for a time; but all the efforts to save his nation from its approaching dissolution, which he clearly foresaw, were defeated by the reckless nobility.

Perhaps no principle in the government of Poland was productive of so many evils as the odious *liberum veto*, which placed the entire legislative power in the hands of any one of the diet, and thereby not only defeated the enactment of salutary laws, but rendered the government powerless, and introduced perpetual civil war and political quarrels, which rapidly hastened the downfall of the government. This unwise policy, which was adopted by the government during the reign of John Casimir, was abolished temporarily in the reign of Stanislas Poniatowski, and restored again with all its horrors during the same reign. It appears to be the prevailing opinion of the patriotic statesmen of Poland, that the *liberum veto* was one of the principal causes of their fall, and was productive of all their misfortune. The idea of unanimity in all exciting political questions, in a legislative body of four hundred members, had its origin only in the fecundity of Polish imagination. Such a principle, so destitute of philosophy, reason, and honesty, so utterly impracticable, and

so full of disastrous consequences, was never thought of by any other nation, savage, barbarous or civilised. A majority suffrage, or a majority of two-thirds on questions of great difficulty and importance, are the sound rules of government.

To an American citizen, the practice of wearing arms in the halls of legislation, and enacting laws sword in hand, by massacring the *nays* for the purposes of unanimity, would present a most horrid spectacle, which would send a universal shudder through the heart and extremities of the body politic. Yet these scenes were familiar to Polish eyes, and were repeatedly acted for centuries, until they were regarded as an indispensable branch of the government. Philosophy seems almost disinclined to pursue its researches beyond this ruinous policy for the cause of Poland's fall. And credulity is ready to question the veracity of that history which records the continuance of a nation's existence for more than fifteen hundred years, founded on a government embracing such savage principles.

The power of life and death over the people, which the government conferred on the nobles, is another of its most odious and destructive principles, and beclouds all its redeeming features. That five hundred nobles, distinguished neither for their humanity nor benevolence, should hold at their disposal the lives of fourteen millions of subjects, every way their equals in color, natural talent and moral worth, liable any moment to be sacrificed by the caprice, licentiousness, and vice of an ungovernable, pugnacious aristocracy, is a startling proposition in the ears of civilised community; and yet such was the settled policy of the Polish government.

The 3d of May, 1776, was a glorious but ephemeral era in their government; and distinguished as the birth-day of the new

but short-lived constitution of Poland, in the reign of Stanislas Poniatowski. This cowardly prince and royal dandy, had ceased to be the king of Poland, and had become the political automaton of the ambitious Catharine, to play for Russia and Germany that foul game, in which the crown of Poland was the stake. The diet of 1776, roused from its stupid dreams of liberty, by the astounding news of the treaty of partition, which sacrificed the Polish nation, and with it the happiness of fifteen millions of souls, now commenced the work of constitutional reform in earnest. The learned and patriotic chancellor, Zamoyski, whose memorable resignation in 1767 was still cherished by the Poles, was appointed commissioner to prepare the draft of a new constitution and code, which he submitted to the Diet in 1780.

He recommended the abolition of the *liberum veto*, and the elective monarchy; the emancipation of the serfs, and the elevation of the trading classes to the privileges of government, with the right of electing deputies for the Diet. Commerce was to receive government patronage, and Poland was to be elevated to European civilization. The humane chancellor had himself set the worthy example of emancipating his serfs on his lands in Biezun, and Stanislas Poniatowski and other nobles imitated his example. But the corruption of the majority of the nobility remained the same; and, under the influence of Russian bribery and hypocrisy, the Diet rejected the new constitution and laws, and declared Zamoyski a traitor to his country for proposing them.

The Diet commenced again on the 30th of September, 1788, and proceeded to the work of reform. They confederated, and abolished the *liberum veto;* increased the army to one hundred thousand men, and established a commission of war, which was

entirely independent of the king or the council. In April, 1791, the Diet made still further advances in the work of reform. The towns were admitted to the elective franchise; the authority of the dietines was abolished, excepting when in a change of the civil or criminal laws; the last vestiges of the *liberum veto* were removed, a plurality of votes was sufficient in general matters; three-fourths were necessary to declare war and make treaties, etc., and two-thirds were required for taxes. At length the celebrated third of May arrived which gave birth to the new constitution. The articles had been long in preparation, and the imbecile king advocated their adoption. The reformers, fearing the opposition of their enemies, altered the day of action from the fifth to the third of May, that they might prevent the coalition of their opponents. On this auspicious day, thousands of anxious spectators, whose hearts beat high with the hopes of redeeming Poland, thronged the royal castle of Warsaw, where the diets were then held, to witness the sublime spectacle *of a nation being born in a day;* by throwing aside the absurd laws and legislation of a remote barbarous age, and adopting a modern constitution worthy of rational freemen.

The effeminate Stanislas summoned courage sufficient for the moment to declare, that the only mode to save the kingdom from the dangers which threatened, was to abolish all legislative and judicial abuses, and establish immediately a new and rational constitution, in harmony with the advanced spirit of the age. He added, that having long been convinced of this, he had prepared a plan of a constitution, which he wished to submit to the assembly. The document having been read through, was violently assailed by the opposition, but the reformers being in the majority, Zabiello, a Livonian deputy, called on the king and the Diet

to swear to the new constitution immediately. The proposition was received with shouts of applause; the king requested the Bishop of Cracow to administer the oath to him, and afterwards added, "I have sworn, and I will never swerve from it. I call on all those who love their country to follow me to the church to take the same oath." He then hastened to the cathedral, followed by all the Diet except twelve members; and all the bishops, ministers, senators, and deputies repeated the oath of their sovereign to support the constitution.

The principal articles were as follows—The Catholic religion was to remain the established religion of the state; all other sects were tolerated, but the king was to be a Roman Catholic; the eligibility of the throne was abolished, and the family of Saxony was to be called to the succession on the death of Stanislas. The executive power was intrusted to the king and his council, composed of six ministers, who could be removed from their office by a majority in the Diet. When the Diets were not in session, the king had the power of making treaties, etc. The previous laws of April 18th, concerning the deputies of the citizens and the abolition of the *liberum veto*, were confirmed; and a new revision of the constitution was to take place every twenty-fifth year.

This was a glorious day for Poland. The reforming penitent received the congratulations of the Pope and the courts of Europe. "It is a work," said Fox, "in which every friend to reasonable liberty, must be sincerely interested." "Humanity," exclaimed Burke, "must rejoice and glory, when it considers the change in Poland!" Frederick William voluntered his good wishes in favor of the new constitution, by a letter to the king, dated the 23d of May, in which he says, "I congratulate myself

on having had it in my power to contribute to maintain the liberty and independence of the Polish nation; and one of my most pleasing cares will be to support and draw closer the bond which unites us." But the unfortunate Poles soon found that the royal courage of Stanislas failed him under the dictation of his Russian mistress; and the friendship of Frederick William soon proved to be base hypocrisy. While the reformers were progressing in their glorious career, and celebrating the anniversary of the 3d of May as a national jubilee, the recusant nobles were plotting the destruction of the new constitution by treasonable alliances with Russia and Germany; and, on the 14th of May, signed an act of confederacy at Targowica, consisting only of thirteen. Russia entered her protest against these innovations; and Frederick William now unmasked his hypocrisy, by openly avowing his hostility to the Polish reforms. The imbecile Stanislas violated his constitutional oath, and deserted his country; while Russia and Prussia assembled their troops in Poland, and compelled the reformers to repeal their reform laws, and abolish their constitution, by the force of overpowering numbers. On the 23d of November, the Diet, by the force of corruption and foreign arms, "pulled down the beautiful structure of the constitution they had so proudly erected; and Poland, at least the remains of it, relapsed into the former absurd mode of legislation." Some of the patriots resisted these foreign invasions to the last; but finding that the serpentine fangs of their merciless destroyers had struck so deep into the heart of the republic, that all hope of recovery was lost, they gave up their government in despair.

"Such was the end of the short-lived constitution of the 3d of May. Ephemeral as it was, it suggests some important reflec-

tions. There are certain stages in disorders of the political constitution, as well as the physical, in which no remedies can afford any service; but, on the contrary, prove fatal. When corruptions and abuses were so widely disseminated, as they were in the Polish government, nothing short of a radical reform can be beneficial; partial weeding is useless; one weed left behind is sufficient to produce another crop of the noxious plants equal to that which we removed. But to bear such a radical reform, popular strength is requisite; and unfortunately Poland had delayed the desirable remedy till its force and resources were too much exhausted; and its sad fate is a warning to other states, not to defer the important season till too late."*

The government continued under Russia without any prospect of improvement, until the death of Catharine; who was the most cruel enemy Poland ever encountered. The emperor Paul pursued a course of clemency towards Poland, unparalleled in Russian history. He liberated Kosciusko, and restored the Polish patriots to their families and fortunes, amounting to nearly twelve thousand. And here we have another instance of the capacity of the Poles for a kind and humane government. The clemency of Paul was more fatal to Polish independence than all the butcheries of Suwarrow. The strong ties of gratitude bound the liberated Poles to an honorable parole, while Kosciusko sheathed his sword for ever. Persecuting Prussia felt the force of human kindness, and followed the example of Russian benevolence, by liberating her Polish prisoners.† On the death of Paul, Alexander ascended the throne; and in compliance with the earnest solicitations of Kosciusko, he gave Poland a new constitution, similar

* Fletcher, 255.

† See the Constitution of Poland in the Appendix, vol. ii.

to that of the 3d of May, 1776. Her merciless tyrants, like their Asiatic predecessor, Belshazzar, now "began to read their fate, traced by the ominous handwriting on the wall." The French revolution and the French hero had created a common interest for the self-defence of tyranny from the invasions of liberty, which now sounded the tocsin of alarm in the ears of Russia and Germany. The despots adjourned for a season the business of plundering Poland, for the more laudable occupation of saving their own heads from the approaching French guillotine. Conscience—a thing apparently then unknown in Russian and German politics—began to thunder its monitions in the ears of Poland's victors. But, unfortunately for Poland, the arms of the allied powers prevail, the man of destiny falls, and the fate of the Poles was now an object of great solicitude to every liberal mind in Europe; while the consultations of the Congress of Vienna were watched with the greatest impatience. The same feeling which leagued the allies against the usurpation of Bonaparte, bound them to atone for their own sins in that way towards the Poles, by restoring to them their independence. The avowed principle of the grand confederacy, which had so recently delivered the world, was, that all should be united for the protection of all; that the independence of each state should be secured by the combination of its neighbors; and that, henceforth, they alone should be put in jeopardy who attempted to violate that mutual confederation of defence, by which all were defended. Is it not *natural*, in such a moment, to look for the restoration of Poland?*

On the 3d of May, 1815, the Congress of Vienna pronounced the fate of Poland. By the fifth article of the treaty between

* Edinburgh Review, Sept., 1814.

Russia and Austria, it was provided that the duchy of Warsaw should be organized into a kingdom, under the Russian crown, with a separate constitution and government. That part of eastern Gallicia, which had formed part of the duchy, was ceded to Austria with the salt mines of Wieliczka. Cracow, and its territory, was erected into a republic, with a separate constitution, under the joint protection of the three partitioning powers. A portion of the duchy was given to Prussia, under the title of the grand duchy of Pomerania. It was also provided, "That the Polish subjects of the respective powers should obtain a representation and national institutions, regulated by the mode of political existence, which each of the governments to which they belong shall think useful and proper to be granted."

In pursuance of these provisions, Alexander, on the 25th of May, issued his proclamation, and on the 20th of June was proclaimed king of Poland, at Warsaw. The authorities repaired to the cathedral, and took the oath of allegiance to the new king. The government continued in the hands of the provisional power until the constitution was prepared, which was entrusted to Count Ostrowski by Alexander's commission. In November, 1815, the emperor arrived at Warsaw, and was received with the greatest acclamations. Medals of the emperor were struck, with the inscription, "*Unus nobis restituit rem.*"

On the 29th of December, 1815, the new constitution was completed, which contained the following provisions:

The government consists of three general departments, namely, the king, and an upper and lower house of parliament. The executive power is vested in the king and his officers. The monarch is to be hereditary. The king declares war, appoints the senators, ministers, counsellors of state, bishops, etc., and

convokes, prorogues, or dissolves parliament. The king can appoint a lieutenant, who must either be a member of the royal family or a Pole. The king, or his lieutenant, is aided by a state council, consisting of the ministers of administration *ex officio*, and counsellors, whom the king may choose to appoint. The ministerial administration is divided into five departments:

1st. The department of public education.

2d. The judicial department, chosen from the members of the supreme tribunal.

3d. Home and police department.

4th. War department.

5th. Finance department.

Each of these departments is under the control of a minister. The ministers are responsible for every act or decree contrary to the constitution.

The king and the two houses of parliament constitute the legislative authority. The senate, or upper house, consists of princes of the blood-royal, bishops, palatines, and castellons, who are appointed by the king, and hold their offices for life. The senate nominates two candidates for a vacancy, and the king takes his choice. A senator is bound to pay taxes to the amount of twelve thousand Polish florins—about six thousand dollars. The number of the senate can never exceed half of that of the lower house.

The lower house consists of seventy-seven members, to be elected by the nobles in the Dietines—one for each district, and fifty-one members elected by the commons. The qualifications for a member are, he must be thirty years of age, and pay annual taxes to the amount of one hundred Polish florins—about fifty dollars. Every member vacates his seat by accepting a civil or

military office. The electors, among the commons, are the land-holders, manufacturers, and all who have stock or capital to the amount of ten thousand florins, or five thousand dollars, all curates and vicars, professors, public teachers, and all artists distinguished for talent both in the useful and the elegant arts. The Diet commences every second year at Warsaw, and holds its session thirty days. All motions are decided by a majority of votes, and a bill passed in one house is to be immediately forwarded to the other. All money bills must be read in the lower house first. The king's consent is necessary to every bill. The supplies are voted every four years. Religious toleration, and the liberty of the press, are secured to all, subject to such laws as should be passed to prevent their abuses; and no person can be punished without the authority of law.

Under this constitution, the emperor appointed Zaïonczek, a Polish veteran, as his lord-lieutenant, to govern four millions of the Polish nation. Polish Prussia, Lithuania, Gallicia, and the republic of Cracow—the remaining parts of Poland—were less successful in their new government. The Congress of Vienna promised constitutional charters to each of these provinces, but failed to fulfil them. The grand duchy of Posnania was granted a Diet by Russia, in 1822, which convened every second year. Their liberty consisted in making representations to the king, who has the right of decision. The offices are held mostly by Germans, although the Diet had the promise that Poles should be eligible. Gallicia also has a Diet, which sits every year at Leopol, for three days only, to receive the orders of government.

Lithuania formed a distinct province, under the government of their ancient laws, modified by the edicts of the emperor,

although Alexander intended to unite it with the kingdom of Poland. It was divided into three governments, Wilna, Grodno, and Minsk, and governed by Lithuanian nobles, with magistrates appointed by the Dietines.

The first constitutional Diet of Poland under Alexander, was held March 15th, 1818. The emperor opened it in person, when he remarked: "Notwithstanding my efforts, perhaps all the evils you have had to groan under, are not yet repaired. Such is the nature of things, good can only be effected slowly, and perfection is inaccessible to human nature."

But all the fair pretensions of Russia, with all the flattering prospects which the credulous Poles anticipated from their new constitution, soon vanished, and the doomed Poles experienced the fulfilment of the prophecy of Kosciusko, who had said as early as 1815: "From the very first I foresee a very different order of things; that the Russians will occupy, equally with us, the chief places of government. This certainty cannot inspire the Poles with very great confidence: they foresee, not without fear, that in time the Polish name will fall into contempt, and that the Russians will soon treat us as their subjects." The constitution was soon violated by Alexander, the liberty of the press and of speech was abolished, and the first of December, 1825, relieved Poland from another tyrant by the death of the Russian monarch.

Nicholas, the brother and successor of Alexander, repeated the same fair promises of government, and, on the 25th of December, issued a proclamation to his Polish subjects, in which he pledged himself to preserve the constitution of his brother inviolate, and says: "Poles, we have already declared that our invariable wish is, that our government may be only a continua-

tion of that of the Emperor Alexander I., of glorious memory; and we declare to you, consequently, that the institutions which he has given you, shall remain without any changes. In pledge, I promise and swear before God that I will observe the constitutional charter, and that I will exert all my care to maintain its observation." After all these repeated pretensions of friendship, the Poles soon found by experience that Russian promises and pledges lacked the important ingredient of integrity.

History blushes to record the bloody tragedy of Nicholas's government in Poland—the thousands and tens of thousands of innocent men, women, and children, whom he murdered without the least provocation—the shameful intrigues and butcheries of his brother Constantine, who acted as his pliant tool, which caused the insurrection of 1830, and ended in the annihilation of the constitution, and the last vestige of Polish government.

Previous to 1831, the government of Poland had two legislative chambers—the deputies and the senate. But since the revolution, Russia has abolished both chambers, and Poland is now governed nearly in the same way as the other provinces of the empire. The council of administration for the kingdom consists of three directors-general—one for the interior, one for justice, and one for finance; also, a comptroller-general, and other officers appointed by the sovereign. The reports of the council are submitted to the emperor by a secretary of state for Poland, residing in St. Petersburg. In the same capital is also a department for Polish affairs, established since 1832, to which the government of Poland is confided. The legislative power is vested in the sovereign, and the proposed laws for the fallen kingdom are submitted for his sanction by the Russian council of state. The local administration of Poland is now in the hands

of civil governors, with the same powers as those established in the different provinces of Russia.*

Such is the history of their government. We have traced the period of its preparation from the reign of Piast back to a time anterior to the Christian era; we have examined its formative period, from Piast to its final dissolution, in 1830, without ever reaching a quiet, sure, and lasting confirmation—without ever approaching a stage of perfection. If we except the freedom of the press, and religious toleration, all the fundamental principles of the government will be found deficient and rotten to the very core—equally destitute of wisdom, utility, and humanity.

Such a government, as might easily be foreseen, was disastrous in the extreme to the Poles. It was too rigorous, too aristocratic, and too unkind for the calm and quiet nature of the Polish masses. Wherever we have been able to find a mild, humane administration—as in the reign of Piast and others—the people have invariably appreciated it, and reciprocated the kindness by love and obedience, while both sovereign and subjects have rejoiced and progressed together. On the other hand, tyranny and oppression have always met with resistance, disobedience, revolt, and treason, ending in the ruin of both the rulers and the ruled. The Poles have an ancient proverb: "You may strip a Pole to his shirt, but if you attempt to take his shirt he will regain all." Had Poland been ruled by a free and humane government, founded on equal rights and just laws, her people, and even her true-hearted peasantry, would now rank as one of the first nations on the globe. It is the true genius of a sound government not to govern too much.

It was the misfortune of Poland to adopt, and persevere in a

* See McCulloch's Universal Gazetteer, Art. Poland.

government of military force, without the aid of moral suasion, which is founded on a pure education and a benevolent religion. Such is the moral constitution of man, that he is the creature of motives, and subject to the influence of reason and human kindness, and, generally, can be governed by no other principles. Cyrus the Great understood this principle of human nature, and framed his government accordingly. And throughout all history, where government has been administered on liberal, humane, and benevolent principles, it has been successful; while, on the other hand, tyranny has ever failed. And we have yet to learn that Poland, or, indeed, any other nation, however ancient or modern —if we except the lowest grades of human beings, known as cannibals—cannot be governed by a free republican system, like the United States of America, or at least a constitutional monarchy like England. The government of Poland was neither a democracy nor monarchy, but the most odious aristocracy, although it had a nominal monarch. All the evils which befell this unhappy people are chargeable to their corrupt government; and those who administer it are responsible for the consequences. Nor is this all. The attentive reader of history will not fail to observe that all fallen nations, Babylon, Assyria, Egypt, the Hebrews, Canaanites, Greece, the Phœnicians, Lydians, Rome, Carthage, the Medes, Persia, the Gothic nations, and the numerous kingdoms of American Indians, adopted governments similar to Poland, and have all shared a similar fate—a lesson worthy of the consideration of the statesman and every citizen.

A government like Poland, containing all the odious features of centralization, so aristocratically condensed, as to benefit only a few nobles—without the self-government of the people—with

a military government generally distracted and feeble—destitute of moral and religious government, except the general influence of Paganism, and a perverted Christian religion, not much better than Paganism—a government without law or order—without a sound, enlightened, public opinion—destitute of legislative government, and deprived of the lights of science, has invariably ruined every nation where the fatal experiment has been tried.

CHAPTER XIV.

LAWS.

Definition of Law—General Divisions of Law—General Principles of Law—Early Laws of Poland—Laws of Casimir II.—Laws of Casimir III.—Laws of Jagellon—Laws of Casimir IV.—Laws of John Albert—Laws of Alexander—Laws of Stanislas—Commercial Law—Admiralty Law—Land Law—Law of Personal Property—Criminal Law—Law of Evidence—Forms of Law—Ecclesiastical Law.

Section I.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF LAW.

The jurisprudence of a nation is the exponent of all their institutions. It appears to be a uniform rule in the history of nations, that their character and condition may be fairly judged of by their laws. Ancient and modern kingdoms fall or flourish, according to the wisdom and purity of their laws and their administration. We can trace this principle through the patriarchal government of the antediluvians; the same rule prevailed under the administration of Noah from the flood to his death; and the student in history finds the same philosophy as he peruses, in chronological order, the history of the Assyrian empire, China, Egypt, the Hebrew nation, the Canaanites,

Greece, the Phœnicians, Lydia, Italy, Macedon, Carthage, Rome, Nineveh, Babylon, the Medes, Persia, Sicily, Syria, Parthia, the kingdom of Italy, the Gothic nations, Spain, France, England, Arabia, the Eastern or Greek empire, the new Western empire, Germany, the Turkish empire, Holland, Russia, Sweden, Prussia, Poland, the Netherlands, India, the United States, South America, and the Sandwich Islands.

This doctrine is more prominent in the history of England and America, than in any other government. These two nations are indebted to their jurisprudence for their unparalleled national glory; and its salutary benefits are felt and enjoyed by every citizen. The laws of England and America throw their fostering, protecting arms around every subject, with equal vigilance, benevolence, and kindness, carefully watching the life, liberty, and property of every human being, rich and poor, high and low, from the cradle to the grave.

Who does not admire the moral courage, unsullied purity, and the unrivalled ability with which Lord Coke and Lord Hale held and balanced the scales of justice, during the perilous reigns of their sovereigns? And, notwithstanding the ermine was tarnished, and the woolsack degraded, by the despicable Jeffreys under his corrupt master, James II., when the British government was nearly wrecked by the concentration of so many crushing circumstances, that the best of British hearts failed them, yet the people at last rallied around their laws, which had so long protected their hearths, and by the redeeming power of their jurisprudence, the country was saved, justice was again restored and administered in its purity, by the immortal Mansfield and his contemporary lord chancellors, undaunted by the flames of their

mansions, and the fiendish shouts of the incendiary mobs who fired them.

Perhaps we shall not escape the criticisms of our transatlantic brethren, for awarding to America the best system of laws in the world. The United States, and particularly the Empire State, have advanced their jurisprudence to a state of perfection unknown in the history of any other government. Law has become a science; and its definitions, divisions, and subdivisions, have been so philosophically and analytically arranged in New York and other American States, that legal science has become a classical study in our colleges and seminaries of learning. The study of law has become an important branch of American literature, as well as an honorable and learned profession.

Law, in its general sense, is a mode of existence, or order of sequence; including those laws by which the Supreme Being governs himself and all his creation. In a more limited sense, it is a rule of action. When applied to civil government, it comprehends those rules of justice by which the rights of man are protected, and his wrongs redressed. All laws may be arranged and divided into three general classes. 1. Natural Law; 2. Moral Law; 3. Forensic Law.

Natural Law includes all the elementary and well-settled rules of the arts, sciences, and literature.

Moral Law comprehends those fundamental rules of the moral sciences, by which rational and immortal creatures are governed, commanding what is right, and prohibiting what is wrong. So far as human beings are concerned, moral law may be divided into four general classes—1. The moral constitution of man; 2. Moral principles; 3. Moral duties; 4. Moral rewards and punishments.

Forensic Law includes those rules of jurisprudence by which civil government is sustained and enforced, and the rights of man are acquired, enjoyed, and protected; containing the rules of civil conduct, prescribed by the supreme power of the state, in harmony with natural and moral law. Forensic law comprehends—1. National law; 2. The law of personal property; 3. The law of real property; 4. Chancery law; 5. Criminal law; 6. The law of evidence; 7. Remedial law; 8. The forms of law; 9. Ecclesiastical law.

Those rules of law which relate more particularly to the rights, responsibilities, and duties of nations, constitute national law. National law in all its branches includes—1. Those laws by which nations govern themselves; 2. The rules by which nations regulate their intercourse with each other; 3. The principles by which they govern their citizens and subjects.

The first class embraces national charters, constitutional law, parliamentary rules, and such statutes as have a national bearing. In the second class we find international law, treaties, commercial law, the conflicting laws of nations, and maritime or admiralty law. The third class prescribes the reciprocal rights and duties of government and citizens, securing to the former support and obedience, and to the latter the rights of life, liberty, character, property, and religion, and all the blessings of a sound government, against all individual, national, and foreign invasions.

The law of personal property includes money, goods, chattels, things in action, evidences of debt, and all legal and equitable rights, which are subject to judicial investigations, exclusive of real property. The law of personal property has two general divisions; First—The different kinds of personal property; and Second—The several titles by which it may be held.

The law of real property comprehends lands, tenements, and hereditaments. There are two general divisions in the law of real property:

1. The several estates in real property.
2. The different titles by which these estates are acquired.

Chancery, or equity law, includes those laws of personal and real property, and those rights which are founded in equity and good conscience, where the remedy at law is imperfect, or is not so easy, speedy, sure, and perfect, as in a court of chancery. It has a more extensive jurisdiction than the common law, and supplies its defects in matters of fraud, accident, trust, and danger.

Those rules of law by which actions and proceedings in the name of the people are prosecuted against persons charged with crimes and misdemeanors, constitute criminal law.

The law of evidence contains those rules by which facts are investigated and proved, and the truth or falsehood of principles is demonstrated. A full and complete system of the laws of evidence would embrace—

1. The general principles of evidence.
2. Natural evidence.
3. Moral evidence.
4. Medical evidence.
5. Judicial evidence.

The general principles of evidence comprehend its philosophy, and the elementary rules for investigating truth in all departments of science. Natural evidence teaches the principles by which the facts and laws of the natural world are investigated, including the arts and sciences generally. Moral evidence relates to those laws and facts by which human beings are governed. Medical evidence embraces the rules by which laws and facts are

proved, that relate to medical jurisprudence. Judicial evidence teaches those laws of evidence by which civil and criminal actions are tried and determined in courts of justice.

Remedial law includes those rules by which actions and proceedings are conducted in judicial tribunals by one party against another, for the enforcement or protection of a right, the redress or prevention of a wrong, or the punishment of a public offence. This branch of law may be divided into five general branches—1. Civil actions at common law; 2. Equitable actions in courts of chancery; 3. Special proceedings in civil cases; 4. Criminal actions; 5. Miscellaneous proceedings.

The forms of law embrace those written precedents which time and usage have sanctioned, as the most appropriate language and instruments to express, prosecute, and secure the legal rights, deeds, and contracts of persons. Ecclesiastical law embraces those rules and regulations by which the several religious sects govern their members, and regulate their intercourse conformable to law.

The common, or unwritten law, contains those elementary principles of right and wrong, by which the legal rights of citizens are enforced, enjoyed, and protected, drawn from the natural and moral law, and sanctioned by the long and continued experience, usage, and customs of a civilised, educated, moral, and religious people.

The municipal law, containing the written or statute law, includes those rules of civil conduct prescribed by the supreme power of the state, commanding what is right, and prohibiting what is wrong, in relation to the legal and equitable rights of citizens, and the prevention and punishment of criminal offences.

Civil law, in its general sense, includes that branch of juris-

prudence which regulates and controls civil rights and remedies, as contradistinguished from criminal law. In a more limited sense, it means the ancient Roman law.

Such are the outlines of the definitions and divisions of American and English jurisprudence, considered as a legal science.

The laws of a nation necessarily require years of patient and persevering progression to bring them to that state of perfection demanded by the condition and wants of a civilized, educated, religious, and free people. The great source and fountain of law is the Creator. From his bosom emanate the laws of nature, as established in creation, and taught in the arts and sciences, and known as natural law. Next in order, and in conformity to the laws of nature, we are taught moral law; containing the great rules of man's moral constitution, the principles he should adopt, the moral duties he is bound to perform, the punishment his disobedience deserves, and the rewards his obedience may expect. From natural and moral law originates the common law; on these three departments of law is based municipal law; from all these sources we frame our constitutional law; and from all these departments of legal science nations derive their national law. With these general principles as our guide, we may now proceed to examine the laws of Poland with greater certainty of success.

Section II.

POLISH LAWS.

The laws of Poland, which prevailed in the early history of their nomadic ancestors, and even as late as the tenth century, like all other barbarous nations, were few, crude, and simple;

founded on *will* and *fear*, and provided only for "what they should eat, or what they should drink, or wherewithal they should be clothed," from day to day, without the least anxiety for the wants and evils of the future. On this brief code of rights depended all other legal restraints, which were considered as auxiliary to these fundamental principles. The will of the chief and the fear of the subject were the foundation of their whole judicial system. The former legislated at pleasure, without the knowledge or consent of the latter; and the laws of the ruler were addressed only to the *fears* of the ruled, without any other reason or logic than *obedience* or *death*.*

This system of jurisprudence continued in Poland until the introduction of the papal system in the tenth century, under the reign of Mieczylas I. The new religion which was substituted in the place of heathendom, was on the whole an improvement, although it sustained and strengthened the fundamental laws of *will* and *fear*, without any judicial reform for the benefit and improvement of the people. The unlimited sales of papal dispensation to the vicious nobility, created a universal law of terror, which ruled the ignorant, superstitious Poles, with an iron sceptre, to the last days of their national existence. The dictation of the Holy See, to a Pole, was the end of the law for all righteousness or unrighteousness which might chance to fall in his way. The Pope, as a condition of absolving Casimir I. from his religious vows to abstain from participating in secular matters, imposed on the credulous Poles the absurd laws of paying Peter's pence, and that the whole nation should shave their heads and wear white surplices on festival days, like all Catholic subjects of that day.

* Fletcher, 19.

The reign of Casimir II., in the twelfth century, is distinguished in Polish history as a period of judicial reform. This humane and benevolent prince early discovered the great want of adaptation in the laws of Poland to the nature and genius of his subjects; and devoted the latter part of his reign to mitigating the rigorous cruelty of a jurisprudence which appealed only to the fears of his subjects, regardless of their rights. Sensible that the Poles were capable of being governed by moral suasion and kind laws, without the coercion and oppression of military force, he ruled his people like a father, and protected the serfs as far as lay in his power from the cruelty of their tyrannical masters. Viewing with sorrow the oppression of the nobles over the people, he frequently expressed his regrets that it was not in his power to change the constitution of Polish society, by abolishing slavery and ruling his subjects by equal, just, and republican laws. Casimir the *Just* died the friend of the people, and the lover of the free.

Casimir III., a model of integrity, wisdom, prudence, and justice, immortalized himself in the middle of the fourteenth century, by giving to the Poles their first written code of laws. Previous to this they had been governed only by oral traditions; the most of which they trace as far back as the reign of Odin, previous to the Christian era. Although this code was far from being as perfect as it should be, to afford equal protection to all, yet it was a great improvement in Polish jurisprudence; and continued substantially the law of the land until the final conquest of the nation—known as the code of Wislica.

Jagellon greatly improved Casimir's code, and established it on a firmer and broader foundation in the diets of 1422 and 1423. It is to be regretted, however, that this judicial reform

brought no relief to the lower classes, but added to their misery and degradation.

The laws of Casimir IV., in the fifteenth century, made some further improvements in Polish jurisprudence; but like his predecessors, he confined his reforms principally to the interests of the king and the nobles.

John Albert, who succeeded to the throne, in 1492 boldly attempted a thorough reform in the government and laws of Poland, on the plan of the British constitution and laws; but his laudable efforts were defeated, as usual, by the jealous, obstinate, and ambitious nobility, except some improvements in the judiciary. Albert, with a lion-hearted courage, brought all the powers of his government and laws to bear on the strength of the aristocrats, by trying to lessen their preponderance in the political scale, by elevating the common people, and augmenting the power of the throne. But his talents and plans were unequal to the task; and from this time the serfs were subjected to the most cruel despotism.

The sixteenth century opened auspiciously for the laws of Poland, under the reign of Alexander, who caused all the laws to be revised and corrected by Chancellor Laski, whose name the code bears. In this reign the Diet descended from their dignity, and made a law by which the king was prohibited from patronizing music, of which he was passionately fond.

The laws of Poland remained stationary until the reign of Stanislas Poniatowski, which brought with it some valuable improvements; and others still more important were attempted, but failed. The coronation Diet, under the influence of the Czartoryskis, made some judicial reforms in the coinage, weights, and measures; and for the first time in Poland introduced a tariff.

The Diet of October 6th, 1766, confirmed and enforced the penal statutes against the dissidents, which had been enacted in the reign of Augustus III. These laws, which had been passed by the solicitations of the Catholics, deprived the dissidents or nobles, who belonged to that religious sect, of all personal participation in the business and offices of government, except military offices, and the right of election; but they could not be deputies themselves, and those who invoked the aid of foreign powers were by law guilty of high treason. The dissidents, in violation of these unreasonable and rigorous laws, had implored the assistance of Russia; and the punishment of this offence constituted the principal business of the Diet. On the motion of the bishop of Cracow, the Diet refused the traitors any relief; but confirmed and enforced the former penal statutes. This Diet made one legal improvement, by requiring the elections in the Dietines to be decided by plurality of suffrages, instead of unanimous acclamation—a provision which relieved the Polish Parliament from great confusion and delay. The laws of religious proscription had now been so far extended as to deprive the Protestants or dissidents of public worship, of offices, and corporations, and rendered them incompetent witnesses in lawsuits. Pietrowski, who had been duly elected a deputy, was disgracefully expelled from the Diet of 1718, only for being a Protestant. Others for the same cause were accused of blasphemy, their property was confiscated, and they were compelled to escape from their country. Unruk, who was of the same faith, having accidentally lost his portfolio, containing religious extracts from several authors, was accused of blasphemy, and sentenced to be beheaded.

On the 19th of November, 1767, the dissident nobility were restored to all their former rights, on an equality with the Catho-

lics, except being eligible to the crown. This reform was accomplished by a conference of commissioners, in which the ministers of the foreign protestant courts, England, Prussia, Sweden, and Denmark, participated, and was confirmed by the diet. The *liberum veto* was re-established, the nobles were deprived of the power of life and death over the serfs; and some other reforms were adopted. Other salutary improvements in the laws were made by the diet of April, 1791, which were soon after repealed.

From this time, the laws of Poland remained substantially the same, until the constitution of Alexander, which would have introduced a new era in Polish jurisprudence, but for the repeated violations of Russia, and, particularly by Constantine, the commander-in-chief.

It is to be regretted that the Polish nation never directed their attention to the cultivation of national law. They appear to have been equally ignorant and negligent of this important branch of government and jurisprudence, in all its fundamental principles: which embrace not only those laws by which nations govern themselves, but also those rules by which nations regulate their intercourse with each other, as well as the principles by which they govern their citizens and subjects. While the surrounding European nations, commencing as early as the twelfth century, were rapidly advancing in the science and practice of national law in all its branches—including national charters, constitutional law, parliamentary law, and such statutes as have a national bearing—together with international law, treaties, commercial law, the conflicting laws of nations, admiralty law, and the reciprocal rights and duties of the government and its citizens—Poland alone seems to have disregarded all these national improvements; and obstinately refused to join their neighbors in their laudable

march of progression. The laws of nations are equally as sacred and obligatory as the duties and obligations of individuals; and both are founded on the same immutable principles of justice and equity.

Poland has ever been obnoxious to the charge of violating their treaties. It is surprising to find, that as early in their history as Lech V., one of their familiar proverbs was "a sovereign is not bound to observe his oath, except when neither his safety nor his advantage requires that he should violate it." And even the distinguished Sobieski, one of the greatest and best kings of Poland, was frequently guilty of violating national treaties, for which he repeatedly received the stern rebukes of the Turks, who were distinguished for their faithful observance of national compacts.*

The constitutional law of Poland, which may be considered as a branch of national law, was contained in the *Pacta Conventa*, which first assumed a legal, constitutional form in the reign of Louis, king of Hungary, in the fourteenth century; although something of the kind, which contained the form of the coronation oath, had existed long before. This brief and imperfect document contained all the fundamental or constitutional law of Poland, previous to the new constitution of Alexander, which never was reduced to practice, except in a very limited manner. The most of the Polish sovereigns adopted the rule of Lech V., and violated the *Pacta Conventa*, when their passions or interests conflicted with its provisions. The constitution expressly forbade the queen, and all female influence in the polity of the nation; yet Mary, the wife of Sobieski, generally managed to govern the king according to her own pleasure. "Her sweet temper," says

* Robbins' Outlines of History, 283.

Connor, "refined sense and majestic air, gained her such affection with the Poles, such influence over the king, and such a sustained interest in the Diet, that she managed all with a great deal of prudence." She was present at all the debates in a private situation, where she could hear without being seen; and really wielded more influence in the Diet than her husband, who was generally in the tented-field, and was not unfrequently held responsible for the intrigues and blunders of his royal consort.

The right of naturalization was never extended to foreigners, except a few landholders; and, consequently, the towns were composed principally of German strangers, Jews, and Armenians, who were engaged in mercantile pursuits, and were considered almost outlaws, and could not be admitted to the rights of naturalization.

In the reign of Alexander, who came to the throne in 1501, the revenue laws were so altered, that the king could not raise any public money, or make any use of it, without the consent of the diet; which was called *Statutum Alexandrinum*.

The parliamentary laws of Poland imposed no restraint on the legislature; and, of course, their assemblies were ungovernable, and their legislation corrupt. The members were allowed to wear their swords, and plunge them into each other's bosoms with impunity. These legislative homicides were so frequent, and innocent, that no one knew when he left his home for the Diet, whether he would return dead or alive. Such a state of things was the natural consequence of the *liberum veto*, which placed the whole action and power of the Diet in the hands of any one who chose to use it; and the massacre of the recusant generally followed. They had a law which forbad parliamentary debates by candle-light; and when the *liberum veto* was not

resorted to for the purpose of adjourning the session, the candle-light law was enforced, which answered the same purpose. This was a favorite device of Augustus, who generally terminated the diets by this artifice, during the thirty years of his reign.

The commercial law of Poland was very limited and imperfect. Dantzig, Thorn, Elbing, and Culm, were the principal mercantile towns. Dantzig, one of the principal Hanse Towns, controlled the commerce of the Baltic; and Casimir conferred on it the exclusive privilege of navigation on the Vistula. Moldavia at the same time was also tributary to Poland; and this nation then enjoyed every facility for uniting the commerce of all northern and southern Europe. But negligence and inactivity rendered all these commercial advantages useless to the Poles, who preferred their wars and political strifes to commerce and wealth.

The absence of foreign and domestic commerce rendered admiralty law useless, and, therefore, this important branch of national law never existed in Poland.

As the nation was generally involved in war with the neighboring kingdoms of Europe, except France and England, the Polish government neglected the cultivation of those friendly relations which are inculcated by the rules of international law; and hence arose those feelings of national hostility which ever existed between the Poles, Sweden, Russia, Tartar, Turkey, Austria, and Prussia, and ultimately led to the fall of the republic. Nations, as well as individuals, always want friends; and he who disregards public opinion, and resorts to any expedient as a substitute for friendship and human kindness, soon becomes the victim of his own folly, and suffers the just punishment of that social law, which he has so unwisely violated.

The numerous conflicting laws of the several provinces, which

at different times composed the kingdom of Poland, were always productive of discord, jealousy, and strife, and frequently produced civil wars. Lithuania, the Ukraine, Great and Little Poland, Prussia, Moravia, Bohemia, Hungary, Courland, and Livonia, all belonged to this ancient and powerful kingdom, and each had laws and institutions peculiar to itself, and repugnant in some instances to each other, which never could be amalgamated nor reduced to one harmonious system of jurisprudence. These conflicting laws had a most unfavorable influence on all their national institutions and interests, and betrayed a weakness which their conquerors used as a pretext and excuse for the final dismemberment of the kingdom.

Such a system of national law—which disregards and repudiates those laws by which nations are bound to govern, not only themselves, but also the rules by which they regulate their intercourse with each other, together with those elementary principles of political ethics, which prescribe the reciprocal rights and duties of government and citizens, securing to the former support and obedience, and to the latter the rights of life, liberty, character, property, and religion, with all the blessings of a sound government—would unavoidably undermine and ruin the best government in the world.

The land law of Poland was so exclusive and defective in its principles, as to exclude all the people from being proprietors in the soil, except the nobility; although the system was free from the shackles of feudalism, which embarrassed Europe generally. The landed estates, and the titles by which they were conveyed and held, were few and simple; and, after the introduction of the Catholic religion, were modified in many respects by the civil law of Rome. The mortgage laws, which arose principally after

the introduction of the Jews, were similar to the Roman system, with very liberal powers of redemption; which the nobles, who were generally in the grasp of Jewish talons, continually watched and enlarged for their own benefit. The privilege of owning real estate was confined to the nobles, with the exception of a few privileged foreigners; while the masses had no stake in the soil, and, of course, felt very little interest in a government which gave them no promise of better days. Their imperfect forms of conveyance, and the absence of proper record-laws, subjected the landholders to numerous frauds and forgeries, by means of interpolated, confused, and ambiguous title-deeds, in which the Jesuits were ever ready to participate. When the allied powers reduced the limits of Polish territory, the land law underwent a radical change in many of its principles; military possession was the only tenure, and the Poles found that empresses and kings set at naught the denunciation, "Cursed is he who removeth his neighbor's landmark." Feudal law never prevailed in Poland until after the conquest. The influence of the Papal power, after the tenth century, gradually conformed, as far as possible, the Polish system of land-law, to the principles of the Roman civil law. Perhaps no principle of law is of more vital importance to the prosperity of any nation, than the liberal, permanent policy of England and America, which allows every citizen to acquire, own and enjoy, freely and securely, all the real and personal property he has the means of purchasing.*

The jurisprudence of Poland was very limited in relation to personal property. As their laws were framed principally for the benefit of the nobles, and as the nobility never engaged in commerce or trade, the law of personal property, which is so

* Malte Brun, IV., 371. Fletcher, 52.

comprehensive and useful in commercial states, had very little application in Poland. The several classes of personal property —comprehending money, goods, chattels, things in action, evidences of debt, and all legal and equitable rights which are subject to judicial investigation, exclusive of real property—were not much known in Polish commerce, and seldom litigated in courts of justice. The title to personal property, and the rules of transfer and conveyance, were generally taken from the Roman law after the twelfth century. Casimir the Great established a law that the serfs, when oppressed, might sell their personal property, and change masters, after paying their debts; but as they seldom had any property, and were not allowed to own real estate, and could not pay their debts, this law, like most of the humane laws of Poland, never was reduced to practice, except in a very few instances. The principal articles of personal property were the serfs, and their agricultural productions, flocks and herds, and farming utensils, which were quite limited.

The laws of Poland in relation to the punishment of crimes were extremely defective; so much so as to scarcely deserve the name of criminal law. Treason, homicide, bribery, duelling, defamation, assault and battery, usury, extortion, forgery, compounding felonies, malicious prosecution, false imprisonment, gambling, licentiousness, and Papal dispensations, were so common and innocent, that they were generally considered more virtuous than vicious. The whole history of Poland, from their earliest tradition to the final dismemberment, is filled with the treasons of their sovereigns and the nobility, which were perpetrated more or less during nearly every reign, with as much deliberation and impunity, as they slaughtered the Turks or sabred the Cossacks; and the only crime or punishment usually attached to these

offences, was the want of success. Successful treason seldom failed to be regarded as a virtue.

Homicide, in all its grades, was so common, as seldom to be punished or noticed. All the disputes of the nobility, political, monetary, religious or otherwise, were generally settled by the murder of one or both of the parties; and the revenge of both combatants descended from generation to generation. Not unfrequently, the nobles killed each other by hundreds, as an act of common justice in political strifes, or as a personal chastisement for some real or imaginary insult. The nobility, possessing the power of life and death over their slaves, seldom failed to inflict the fatal chastisement of death for the most trifling dereliction of duty, under the rigor of their odious law, which was never mitigated until the new constitution of November 19th, 1767. The Polish monarchs frequently granted a general pardon to the nobility for all murders and other offences, in addition to the dispensation of the Pope, prefacing these unhallowed edicts with this arrogant preamble, "*Nos divini juris rigorem moderantes.*"*

Bolesias, on his return from his seven years' debauch in Kiow, murdered, in cold blood, several thousand women, children, nobles, and slaves, without any previous trial or evidence of guilt, and then deliberately massacred St. Stanislas, the bishop of Cracow, while ministering at the sacred altar of the cathedral, because the worthy saint had reproved his inhuman butchery of almost the entire population of the vicinity. If a man apprehended a murderer and brought him before the court, he had to pay the court ten ducats for the privilege of doing so; and if this fee were not paid immediately, the murderer was soon discharged.†

* Puffendorf's Law of Nations, VIII., iii. Fletcher, 183.

† Edinburgh Encyclopedia. Art., Poland.

Larceny was so common, that it was considered quite below the notice of the judiciary; and, even then, it was difficult to bring the offender to justice, except in extreme cases, and at very great expense on the part of the complainant. It cost a merchant of Warsaw fourteen thousand ducats for the *privilege* of apprehending two thieves.*

The crime of perjury was one of the most prevalent and destructive vices in Polish society. Sobieski was on the brink of ruin by a foul charge of treason, proved by wilful and deliberate perjury. And he who had the depravity and hardihood to boldly and unhesitatingly commit the most infamous perjury, received from the hands of the corrupt court the credit of right and justice as the reward of his villany.†

Bribery appears to have been a common failing with all classes; and its universality adorned this pernicious offence with the garb of innocence. The judges uniformly, with open-handed corruption and unblushing insolence, sold their decisions to the highest bidder; and no cause, however just, could be sustained without bribery, and he who paid the highest was the successful party.‡

Duelling among the Poles appears to have been more common and laudable than the repartee, irony, and wit of the most refined civilization of modern nations. John Sobieski was a most notorious duellist from his early youth, a crime which he bitterly regretted in his last days, under the monitions of a guilty conscience, and the pains of his almost mortal wounds, which he received from the swords of the Pacs in some of his deadly combats.

The law of retaliation was the only punishment known to the

* Edinburgh Encyclopædia. Art., Poland. † Fletcher, 39, 84.
‡ Edinburgh Encyclopædia. Art., Poland.

Poles for the offence of defamation, including slander and libel; and yet no dereliction of duty was more common than slander, both oral and written. Kings frequently lost their crowns, and nobles their heads, fortunes, and character, by the vile and most prevalent sin of falsehood. This offence was generally felt most keenly by the injured party, and punished by immediate assassination, without explanation or investigation; and this summary, and frequently unjust punishment, was followed by the revenge of the friends of the parties for several generations.

The frequency of assault and battery in Polish society was so common an act as to be beneath legal punishment; and, consequently, these offences were generally redressed sword in hand, on the spot, at the sacrifice of limb or life of one or both of the combatants.

The nobility, and not unfrequently royalty itself, under pecuniary embarrassments, suffered severely by the usury and extortion of the Jews—their imported brokers—whose avarice, uncontrolled by law, knew no other limits than competition and fear of retaliation. These usurers and extortioners frequently carried their abuses so far, that the worst consequences were apprehended for the safety of their persons and property from the retributive vengeance of their impoverished and angry debtors.

Forgery was a prevalent crime as late as the reign of Sobieski; and the lands of his queen were endangered by the fabricated deeds of the Jesuits. The king, however, soon remedied the evil in the queen's case, by writing to the general of the Jesuits, in which he said: "I shall not summon your brethren at Jaroslaw to appear before the Diet, where I should have on my side both justice and the respect that is due to me. I am afraid of increasing, by this means, the hatred which is already borne you.

I only advise you to be on your guard against those who have the management of your houses." * This admonition produced an immediate restitution of the purloined property, and the Jesuits, in the future, carefully abstained from all further forgeries which affected the king and his family.

The composition and settlement of the highest crimes and misdemeanors was never considered a criminal offence, nor a violation of law in Poland. Pecuniary compensation for crime existed as early as history can trace the government, until the reign of Stanislas, when it was first abolished by the Diet of November 19th, 1767. This law had the effect of exonerating the wealthy nobles, who were able to pay for their crimes, from all punishment, however aggravated the offence; and those who had not the means of paying for their crimes in ready cash, were often subjected to rigorous chastisement. This state of things of course arrayed the poor against the rich, while the former redressed their grievances by murdering the latter; and, what was still worse, the king increased the evil by granting free and unconditional pardons to the nobility for all crimes.†

Malicious prosecution was a common occurrence in all ages of the Polish government, and without redress, except by personal combat. This offence was a prolific source of civil, religious, and criminal persecution, which never failed to involve the parties and their friends in bloody strifes, and frequently ended in civil war. Remedial law and the law of evidence were so defective, as to afford no protection from malice and perjury; and the principle of preventing the commission of crimes and injuries was unknown to Polish jurisprudence.

One of the most prominent evils in the government and laws of

* Fletcher, 94. † Fletcher, 40, 143.

Poland, was the absence of all protection from false and malicious imprisonment. The practice of imprisoning on the slightest pretence, without law or evidence, without the right of bail or preliminary investigation, prevailed, until it was abolished in the reign of Jagellon, in the Diet of 1423. To him the Poles are indebted for the humane and far-famed law, that no individual is to be imprisoned until convicted; and it seems highly probable that the modern nations of Europe and America, who have adopted the same principle in a modified form, imported it from the plains of Sarmatia. Jagellon, by this law, more than for any other act of his life, secured the veneration of his people, and, so highly were his wise administration and humane laws esteemed by the oppressed people, that the crown of Poland descended to his heirs without interruption for one hundred and eighty-six years; another argument, almost conclusive, in favor of our position, that the Poles were capable of a free government, like America, or a constitutional monarchy, like England; and were capable of obeying and appreciating a sound government, had they been permitted to enjoy it, under the progressive influence of civilization, education, and moral improvement.*

Gambling of all kinds, and in its most vicious forms, was countenanced by law; and was attended with its usual consequences and vices. Casimir II., after many years' indulgence in this fashionable vice, renounced it as a pernicious practice, and restored the money he had won,—a noble example, and worthy of imitation.†

The remaining vices, intemperance and licentiousness, which always grow in the same nursery with gambling, were too common to be controlled by law; and their general prevalence among the

* Fletcher, 47, 58. † Fletcher, 35.

nobility caused frequent pecuniary embarrassments and fatal quarrels: the invariable consequences of such antecedents.

The impunitive crimes of Polish society were greatly increased and encouraged by the general and unlimited Papal dispensations, which were granted for all offences to the nobility and royalty. No crime—murder and treason not excepted—was punished by the Pope, so long as the perpetrators adhered to the Catholic faith, and paid liberally for the pardoning indulgences.

The office of chancellor in the Polish government was confined to the ministerial duties imposed by the king, who seems to have been his confidential adviser in the affairs of state, similar to the lord chancellor of England, before he assumed equity jurisdiction. One of the most distinguished Polish chancellors was Zamoyski, whose code of 1780 gave him rank as one of the most distinguished jurists of Poland; though he never entertained chancery jurisdiction as an equity judge. His celebrated code appears to be taken principally from the civil law, with some few drafts on British jurisprudence.

Their remedial law was a signal failure. The laws were seldom enforced; and when the administration of justice was attempted, it was so corrupt, expensive, and tardy, that all parties were generally ruined. It is a remarkable fact, which is well authenticated by history, that the remedial law and the law of evidence, in all nations, are more defective than any other branch of jurisprudence. It is found much easier to make laws than to execute them. The laws of Poland, had they been administered with justice, dispatch, and economy, would have answered many useful purposes; but, as they were never enforced with integrity, they were a most serious evil.

As early as the reign of Boleslas I., in 999, the judges consisted

of the *comes*, or military commanders of the districts, who were called Kastellani and Castellans. The principal business of the king consisted in travelling from province to province, to administer justice in person and decide appeals; whose decrees and sentences were executed by the armed force of the nobility, who acted as sheriffs and police. "By my faith," said Henry of Valois, when elected to the throne, "these Poles have made me nothing but a judge." Their system of conveyancing was a system of forgery, and of interpolated and confused title-deeds, in the hands of the monks, Jesuits, and lawyers of Poland.*

Previous to Casimir's reign, in the fourteenth century, who introduced the first written code, the administration of justice was a mere game of hazard. Corrupt precedent, erroneous opinion, base passion, perjury, and bribery, were the elementary principles by which the practice of law was conducted. The noble, having the military command of a district, was the supreme judge over his demesne, whose decision was final, except the mere show of redress, which nominally existed in the right of appeal from his court to the king. This right of appeal afforded little or no relief to the injured party, who well understood the prejudices of royalty in favor of the most powerful nobles, who were generally successful, right or wrong.†

The prevalent practice of compounding crimes, and granting royal pardons and Papal dispensations, superseded remedial law, and palsied the arm of justice. Casimir organized regular courts in each palatinate, with fixed fees for their services, similar to England; but the shameful practices of their remedial law rendered all judicial reforms entirely useless.

* Rulhiere, I., 17—19. Alison, I., 351. Fletcher, 21, 94

† Fletcher, 39.

Jagellon introduced an important improvement in criminal trials, by suspending imprisonment until after conviction. The dietines, or *colloquia*, which had long been held by each of the palatines in their palatinates, for the administration of justice, were continued principally for the benefit of the nobility. Chancellor Laski, in his revision of the Polish laws, made some improvements in the practice of law; but, like all other judicial reforms, it was found much easier to enact them than to reduce them to practice. The constitution of Alexander erected a new judiciary, independent of the other state departments, and organized a regular gradation of courts, from justices of the peace to the high court of appeals, similar to England, which would have been an ornament to the jurisprudence of Poland, had the system been reduced to practice, and carried out in good faith.*

The practice of judicial trials before the diets, mingled with the confusion and corruption of public elections on the plain of Volo; the administration of justice in the supreme judicial tribunals, composed of the nobility, who acted as judges, and changed every fifteen months by their elections, were insurmountable obstacles to a wise and just administration of the laws. The judges were nominated by the king, without regard to their talents or integrity. Their decisions were sold to the highest bidder; and no cause, however meritorious, could be sustained without bribery. The cheapest litigation of debtors and creditors could not be closed short of four or five years; and seldom within that time. It was common and frequent for suits to linger in the courts undecided for twenty, thirty, and sometimes sixty years, until the parties were compelled to withdraw their suits, and decide them by force of arms and deadly combat. These

* Fletcher, 47, 53.

judicial abuses continued as late as the eighteenth century. They have now, under Russia, courts, civil and criminal, better conducted. These tribunals embrace two courts of appeals, and one supreme court, which is final, and several subordinate courts.*

The imbecility and abuses of remedial justice were not confined to the courts of Poland; but have been felt as evils in Westminster Hall, and in the American halls of justice; from which it seems almost impossible to escape, without continuous and vigorous reform. The mal-practices of remedial law have ever been the subject of serious complaints, from the early history of jurisprudence; and Poland had her full share of these judicial evils.

The law of evidence is a production of comparatively recent origin. It is the offspring of modern civilization; and is the brightest ornament of English and American jurisprudence. Judicial evidence, which is the means sanctioned by law of ascertaining in a judicial proceeding the *truth* respecting a question of fact, was unknown to Polish jurisprudence. Besides the three modes of trial by ordeal, the arbitration of civil cases was equally absurd. A written oath was administered to one of the parties, and was made the criterion of the case. If the reader made the least hesitation or mistake, he lost his cause. On the contrary, he who had sufficient hardihood to go unhesitatingly and unblushingly through the process of perjury, obtained for his villany the credit of right and justice. The form was, however, as reasonable as any other mode of ordeal, and in fact still more so, for it was not made to depend entirely on chance; nor was it so absurd as trial by single combat. Guilt is sooner confused and unnerved by the eye of scrutiny, than by the drawn sword; and the

* Alison, I., 349, 353; Edinburgh Encyclopædia, Art. Poland.

"*mens conscia recti*" arms itself more frequently with the defensive armor of the uncowed eye, and the firm, composed voice, than with muscular strength and agility. Had the naturalist or philosopher, in his investigations of the laws of nature, the moralist in his researches for ethical laws, and the jurist in ascertaining moral truth, all reposed on such facts and rules of evidence as the Poles adopted, the world would now be slumbering in the midnight darkness of the middle ages.*

Their superstitious forms were most rigorously adhered to in the administration of justice, as well as in religion and politics. Their system of forms extended to all the affairs of Church and State, including all classes of society, and all their civil and religious institutions. Their servile manners, the grovelling superstitions and ignorant devotions of the masses, made them the subjects of senseless and degrading forms, which are the invariable exponents of a semi-civilized race.

Ecclesiastical law embraces those rules and regulations by which the several religious sects govern their members, and regulate their intercourse conformable to law. This was the supreme law of Poland, to which all others were subservient. The terrors of the Papal church, to the credulous and superstitious Poles, were paramount to the terrors of death; and the Catholic sovereigns and nobles used this power as the great and controlling law of their government. When the thunder-bolts of Papal vengeance were dashed at the head of the rebellious—as in the case of the unfortunate Boleslas—the miserable victim found no earthly protection; and sovereigns, heroes, crowns, and castles, furnished no excuse, shield, or resting-place for the miserable objects of ecclesiastical punishment.

* Fletcher, 39.

The very limited and imperfect literature of Poland, the general ignorance of the common people, and the absence of educational institutions, deprived the government of the advantages arising from the controlling influence of natural law, which is founded on the arts, sciences, and general literature.

The influence of moral law, comprehending those principles of moral rectitude which appeal to the hopes, the fears, the retribution, the perfection, and the temporal and eternal interests of man, was very feeble in Poland. The power of moral motives, prompted by a pure religion and refined literature—the foundation of every wise government, and the bulwark of freedom —was too feeble to afford any permanent aid to their laws. That system of jurisprudence which prevails in England and America, and is undoubtedly the best in the world, is founded on moral law; which comprehends those principles which human reason has discovered, to regulate the conduct of man in all his various social, moral, and political relations. Moral law is the science which teaches men their duty, and the reasons of it. In a more enlarged sense, it comprehends natural theology, moral and political philosophy, embracing man's duties to God, himself, and to others. The obligatory force of moral law is derived from its presumed coincidence with the will of God. The Creator has made men according to His own good pleasure, and has established the laws of his being, and determined his powers and faculties. And so indispensable are these principles for the proper government of the human species, that all efforts to frame laws and governments without them have proved unsuccessful.*

The law of *habeas corpus* seems to have been overlooked by the Polish jurists. The nobility had no need of it, for the reason

* Encyclopædia Americana, IX., 150.

they could not be deprived of their liberty; and the people were deprived of it, because they had no liberty. And had the law been introduced, it never could have been enforced under such a government, where the civil law is subservient to military despotism.

Martial law was so prevalent, that civil law in all its departments was subservient to it, and constituted their entire system of remedial law. It ruled all classes, and disposed of life, liberty, property, and happiness, without the right of appeal or previous investigation; and united in the same persons—the nobles—the absolute power of the sword with the purse, together with the legislative, judicial, and executive authority.

Superadded to all these judicial evils, is the absence of a common law system, founded on the pure, immutable principles of justice and right, which has long been the pride and glory of English and American jurisprudence. We search in vain in the history of Polish jurisprudence, from the earliest laws of Odin, to the constitution and code of Alexander, for any vestiges of a common law system which protects the rights of man by the rules of eternal justice.

Commercial law, which is of the first importance, and universally diffused for the benefit of all classes in commercial nations, was little known in Poland, for the reason they had no commerce which received judicial protection. It was the mistaken policy of the Polish government to discourage both domestic and foreign commerce, which is the life of a nation, and the support of the people.

The civil and commercial codes now in force are for the most part the same as in France; and the criminal code is modelled on that of Prussia and Austria. Personal and religious liberty

are nominally guaranteed to those who do not interfere with politics, find no fault with the government, and give it a servile support. The press is under the control of censors, who are more active and rigorous than in Russia Justices of the peace have jurisdiction in civil causes to the amount of five hundred florins. All larger sums are tried before the tribunals of original jurisdiction in the capitals of the several governments. At Warsaw, besides a court of appeal, there is a supreme court of cassation; and commercial tribunals are established in all the principal towns. Criminal causes are tried in separate tribunals, of which there are four in the kingdom. Political offences come under the cognisance of a council of war, or a special commission.*

The principal authors on Polish law are the codes of Wislica, of Chancellor Laski, and of Zamoyski; and the works of Macieiowski, Budny, and Sanwicki.

We have now finished a general portrait of Polish law, by examining its general principles without entering into the minutiæ of the system, which would be out of place in a work of this kind. Enough has been exhibited to show its character and influence on the fall of Poland. Its ruinous effects on the king, the nobility, the peasantry, and all classes of Polish society, with its prejudicial influence on foreign courts, may be easily traced by contrasting the laws of Poland with the useful and sound principles of jurisprudence adopted by other prosperous and civilized nations, as briefly sketched in the introduction of this chapter.

Poland never had a well-organized judiciary. Until a very late period in her history, what little jurisprudence they had was feebly, erroneously, and corruptly administered by the king and his nobles, under the influence of perjury, caprice, and bribery—

* M'Culloch's Universal Gazetteer, Art. Poland.

without law, justice, or learning to guide their deliberations. After the organization of their imbecile judiciary, the administration of justice was a matter of merchandise, under the control of bargain and sale for the highest bribe and the blackest perjury. In all nations where such a corrupt jurisprudence prevails, history uniformly records the same disastrous consequences; and Poland is not an exception to the general rule.*

* Fletcher, 47, 236. Encyclopædia Americana, X., 212.

CHAPTER XV.

LITERATURE.

General Principles of Literature—Polish Language—First Period of Polish Literature—Second Period—Third Period—Fourth Period—Fifth Period—Sixth Period—Seventh Period—Polish Theatre—Polish Music—General Views of Polish Literature.

Section I.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF LITERATURE.

The term literature, in its most general sense, comprehends the sciences, the arts, and general learning. The arts admit of three general divisions; the useful arts, the fine arts, and the magic arts. There is always more or less difficulty involved in drawing the dividing line between the sciences, properly so called, and the arts; for the reason, that in many instances they are so blended together, that it is impossible to separate them, by any order of classification. The learned generally apply the term science to those departments of knowledge which are more speculative or abstract in their nature; and which are conversant with truths or phenomena that exist at the time we contemplate them. The arts, on the contrary, are generally treated as those departments of knowledge which originate in human ingenuity,

and depend on the active or formative operations of the mind, without which they could not have existed. Human knowledge is derived originally from discovery and invention, founded on investigation, reflection, and action. Discovery is the process of science, and invention is the work of art. So intimate is the connection, that we not unfrequently meet with both a science and an art in the same branch of study, as in music; and this connection is more common in modern than in ancient literature. During the process of civilization, which elapses between barbarism and complete refinement, the arts are generally in advance of the sciences and literature. The arts in many instances exhibit the same intimate connection between the useful and fine arts; as some of these have more or less of common principles peculiar to both. For example, painting is a useful art, as in house painting, and a fine art in the canvas painting of pictures.

It is the province of all science to ascertain the established relations of things, by reasoning from cause to effect, and from effect to cause; or the tendency of certain events to be uniformly followed by certain other events; and the aptitude of certain bodies to produce, or to be followed by certain changes in other bodies in particular circumstances. The object of art is to avail ourselves of the knowledge which we acquire by means of science, by applying the rules of science to the practical purposes of life. Art must, in all cases, therefore, be founded on, and governed by science, in accordance with their fixed and uniform relations and tendencies.

The useful arts are divided into four general classes—1. Food; 2. Clothing; 3. Architecture; and 4. The mechanical arts. These general classifications embrace—1. The arts of writing and printing; 2. The arts of designing and painting; 3. The

arts of engraving and lithography; 4. The arts of sculpture, modelling, and casting; 5. Architecture and building; 6. Arts of heating and ventilation; 7. Arts of illumination; 8. Arts of locomotion; 9. Arts of conveying water; 10. Arts of combining flexible fibres; 11. Arts of horology: 12. Arts of metallurgy; 13. Arts of vitrifaction; and 14. Arts of induration by heat.

The useful arts are so called, because their main object is *utility;* whereas the principal object of the fine arts and magic arts is, to gratify imagination, curiosity, and taste. Some of the arts are of a mixed nature, being both useful and ornamental, as painting. The fine arts embrace painting, sculpture, architecture, music, dancing, poetry, history, elocution, engraving, gardening, etc. The magic arts embrace the rules of natural magic.

The sciences may be divided into two general classes—1. Physical science; 2. Moral science. Physical science includes astronomy, natural philosophy, chemistry, meteorology, agriculture; and natural history—which comprehends botany, zoology, geology, geography, etc. Moral science embraces philology, history, religion, political economy, jurisprudence, government, mental and moral philosophy, etc. To this catalogue may be added the general divisions of ancient literature, the literature of the middle ages, from the fifth to the fifteenth century, and modern literature since the fifteenth century.

The great object of literature is human improvement. This object can be attained only by education. There are three general branches of education; intellectual, moral, and physical. Mental education has for its object the improvement of the mind in all its various faculties; and to exercise, discipline, and invigorate the powers of the mind. Moral education embraces the education of the moral feelings, the knowledge of morals and

religion, and a suitable preparation for a future state. Physical education includes a knowledge of the laws of health, and their practical bearing on the body, in the improvement of all the physical powers. So far as our knowledge extends in the universe, there are certain natural laws, which affect all created things, animate and inanimate; which are independent of each other, having universal application, without regard to moral character. The Creator has made man subject to these natural laws, as well as moral laws; all of which he must obey, or suffer the penalties of his disobedience. In order to render man healthy, happy, wise, and useful, it is necessary to understand his physical nature, and the natural laws by which he is governed. To cultivate the *mental* and neglect the *physical* powers is unwise, and calculated to do immense injury. Good health, vigorous intellectual powers, and long life, depend essentially on proper physical education. Much of the misery and wretchedness in our world, is caused by ignorantly violating the physical laws of our being. More knowledge of the physical laws of the human body, the true nature and functions of the different organs, the general laws of health and disease, must be possessed by parents and teachers, before the youth of the country shall grow up vigorous, healthy, and happy. Physical education should commence in youth; and the child should at all times be permitted and taught to obey physical laws. Hence, the first five or six years of his existence should be devoted to cultivating his physical nature, by his gambols in the house or field, whirling his top, or rolling his hoop; while he expands his mental powers by reading the book of nature, as seen in the sun, the clouds, the running brook, the trees, the flowers, the birds, and every innocent amusement in the school of nature. Nor should the book education of a child com-

mence too young; as the confinement necessary at school, and the mental effort required, frequently prove injurious to the young child, by preventing a proper development of the muscular and nervous system. The intellectual and physical powers should not be cultivated at the expense of the moral powers; but all should be cultivated in symmetrical harmony, and in such perfection, that all the powers, both intellectual, moral, and physical, can be brought to a focus in patient thought, on every subject of investigation, which is the great aim of literature.

Nor is this all. Literature aims at elevating all classes of community to higher attainments; by teaching that all material substances are subject to fixed laws, and cannot be used except in obedience to those laws; that they cannot be employed in obedience to those laws, unless the laws are understood; and they cannot be understood without science. Science cannot be superseded by experience, nor by arbitrary rules, which teach nothing but disconnected facts and processes; and science alone inculcates laws of the requisite simplicity and generality. A knowledge of such laws confers great advantages on the laboring man, by preparing him for new emergencies; by giving him command of the simplest, the cheapest, and most economical methods of attaining his ends: it enables him to appreciate profound improvements, especially in his own art; qualifies him to become an inventor or discoverer,—prevents him from attempting impossibilities, relieves him from superstition and egotism, enlarges his mind, and improves his moral character.

Section II.

POLISH LANGUAGE.

It is the opinion of some of the most distinguished philologists, that several of the Slavic nations used a written language, long before the introduction of Christianity in the ninth century, and previous to their acquaintance with the Latin alphabet, or the invention of the Cyrillic letters. Some of the arguments in favor of the high antiquity of the Polish language are still unanswered; although no monuments of a written tongue remain of those early years, nor of the four or five centuries after the introduction of Christianity; and with the exception of a few unimportant fragments, the most ancient documents of the Polish language extant, were written in the sixteenth century; previous to that time, the Latin was the only written language. Their early teachers of the Christian religion were, for nearly five centuries, foreigners, from Germany and Italy; and this accounts for their universal negligence of the vernacular tongue of the Poles, of which they were ignorant. The influence of the German and Latin languages over the Polish, is still visible on almost every page of Polish literature. Benedictine monks, in the beginning of the eleventh century, founded the first Polish schools. These schools and numerous convents of the monks and other orders, were the only asylums of Polish literature, when the Mongols in the year 1241 overran the country; and also during the civil wars which ravaged the land, arising from the family quarrels of Piast's pugnacious successors. Long before the commencement of the history of Polish literature, several chronicles were written

in Latin by Polish noblemen, who were educated in Paris, Bologna, and Prague.

In describing the language of Poland, it is necessary to distinguish between Poland in its meridian splendor of the sixteenth century, and the condition of the country after the partition, as well as the several languages and dialects of the nation. Poland, in the days of her culminating glory, in the sixteenth century, by the force of her arms, for a short time, was the most powerful state in all northern Europe. During that period of national splendor, the Teutonic Knights, the conquerors of Prussia, were compelled to bow to the Polish sceptre, and ask protection; when Livonia, Courland, Smolensk, Kief, and the Russian provinces adjacent to Galicia, were all ruled by the same Polish sovereign. In speaking of the language of Poland and the country in which it is predominant, we include an extent of territory much more limited than that which composed the kingdom in the height of its power; and, of course, we include the country as it existed at the time of its first partition between Russia, Austria, and Prussia. The balance of authorities teaches, that of all the five millions of inhabitants in the provinces joined to Russia, at the three successive partitions of 1772, 1793, and 1795, not more than one and a half million can be counted as strictly Poles, or Leches, who speak dialects of that language. In White and Black Russia, the Russniaks are much the most numerous; and in Lithuania, the Lithuanians excel in numbers, who use an independent language; and the Malo-Russian and White Russian dialects, are also spoken in these provinces; in which all the documents of the grand duchy of Lithuania, previous to its union with Poland in 1569, were written.

Besides the one and a half million of Leches before mentioned,

the Polish language is also spoken by the inhabitants of the kingdom as formed in 1815, numbering three and a half millions; or if we include the Poles of the Polish-Russian provinces, the number would reach five millions. The same language is used by the inhabitants of the cities, and the nobility of Galicia belonging to Austria, and the Poles in Austrian Silesia, containing about three millions of souls; and by the inhabitants of the small republic of Cracow, numbering about one hundred thousand; and also by the people of the Prussian grand-duchy of Posen, and a part of the province known as Western Prussia, together with the Poles in Silesia, and the Kassubes in Pomerania, numbering not far from two millions. After all due allowances for the errors and discrepancies of the conflicting authors, it may be safely estimated, that the Polish language is now spoken by almost ten millions. Like all living languages it is varied by different dialects, and in some places spoken with greater purity than in others.

The ancient Polish language was undoubtedly nearly related to the dialects of the Czekhes and the Sorabian Vendes. It has been controlled and varied very much by the Latin and German idioms; although our knowledge of its early history and subsequent development is very limited. Of all the other Slavic dialects, the Bohemian is the only one which has stamped itself upon the Polish tongue. We are able to trace very distinctly numerous Italian and Turkish words, which were incorporated into the Polish language during the supremacy of the Italian priesthood, and by the political relations of the Poles and the Turks. Of all the Slavic dialects, the Polish is the most formidable to foreigners. The great variety of sounds in the pronunciation of the vowels—the numerous combinations of con-

sonants, which only Slavic tongues can pronounce and soften so as to be agreeable to polite ears—and its refined and artificial grammatical structure—its lexical meanings, and numerous rhetorical and oratorical powers, render the language almost useless and inaccessible to foreigners. But the Polish language is not without harmony in the mouths of natives; and, in the conversation of Polish ladies, resembles the warbling of birds.* In grammatical structure it differs very much from the Russian language, which is remarkable for its simplicity and perspicuity, though by no means deficient in richness. The Polish and Bohemian idioms excel all the other Slavic dialects in their capabilities for imitating the refinements of classical languages. Philologists are frequently surprised to find that the Polish language in poetry does not admit of classical prosody, although in prose it is modelled after the Latin with a remarkable perfection, which formed one of the most distinguishing features in the golden age of Polish literature. The Polish poets have not *measured*, but, imitating the French, have *counted* the syllables; though it is probable that in its primeval character it possessed, in common with all the other Slavic languages, the elements of a system of long and short syllables. All Polish poetry is similar to the French in rhyme, with a few exceptions of the more modern poets who have written in blank verse, and a few feeble attempts to apply the principles of Greek accent to the Polish language; although the French Alexandrine appears to be the favorite form of the Polish poets.

Polish language, taken in connection with its Slavonic origin, with its numerous Indian roots, and Greek, Latin, French, German, and other interpolations, presents a much greater variety

* Malte Brun, IV., 373.

than Joseph's coat of many colors. Although the traditionary character and uncertainty of the early Polish history involve the rise and progress of the Polish language and literature in some obscurity, yet no doubt exists of its Slavonic origin, as its whole structure clearly proves. It differs very much from the Russian language on the east, by the great multiplicity of hard consonants —a peculiarity common to the people who formerly inhabited the country, from whom the language was originally derived. The cultivation of the Polish language at an early period met with violent opposition from the Greek and Roman clergy of the dark ages, who superstitiously persisted in the use of the Latin ritual of 965, as the only medium of religious instruction; and the clergy, being the most educated class, used the Latin language for all official and religious business, and introduced it into the society of royalty, of the nobility, and of all the educated citizens, to the great neglect and almost entire exclusion of the vernacular tongue; an error peculiar to the clergy of the middle ages generally.

Sigismund I. rescued the Polish language from its former embarrassments and obscurity, and made it the written language of his country, in the middle of the sixteenth century. It declined again in the seventeenth century, but was restored during the reign of Stanislas Augustus, and reached a maturity and refinement, which withstood all the subsequent political changes and misfortunes of the country. Under the patronage of the Bishop Abbertrandi, in 1801, a society for the preservation of the Polish language was formed at Warsaw; and in 1802 the first volume of their transactions was published. The Polish language is far superior in harmony and flexibility to the other Slavonic dialects, notwithstanding its apparent harshness from

the multiplicity of its consonants. The best grammars of the language have been written by Mongrovius, Vater, George Bantkie, and Meczinski. The most reliable dictionaries are those of Bantkie and Linde. For centuries the Latin language was used and cultivated to the almost total neglect of the vernacular tongue. Nearly all the Polish historians, from Martin Gallus of the twelfth century, between the years 1110 and 1135, whose works are the oldest extant on the subject, till nearly the seventeenth century, were clerical gentlemen, and wrote in Latin.

Section III.

FIRST PERIOD OF POLISH LITERATURE.

The history of Polish literature may be conveniently divided into seven successive periods. The first period embraces their language and learning previous to the introduction of Christianity, in A.D., 840. The second period extends from the introduction of Christianity, in the ninth century, to the reign of Casimir the Great, in 1333. The third period reaches from 1333 to the reign of Sigismund I., in 1506. The fourth period, usually styled the golden age of Polish literature, includes the reign of the first Sigismund, and closes with the foundation of the schools of the Jesuits, in 1622. The fifth period commences on the termination of the fourth, and comprises the history of the Jesuits during their preponderance, and ends with the revival of letters by Konarski in 1760. The sixth period extends from 1760 to the revolution in 1830. The seventh and last division comprehends the interval from 1830 to 1850.

The researches of both ancient and modern philologists leave very little doubt that all nations, so far as we know, have a budding literature, more or less developed, long previous to their use of letters, and a written language. Their early vegetations of learning are generally found in their popular songs, including their poetry and music, their traditions, legends, romantic tales, their hieroglyphics, their monuments, and other similar means of perpetuating their history and feeble literature. The literature, or learning of a people, previous to the use of writing, must necessarily rest principally in memory and tradition; and thereby perpetuated from generation to generation, by the oral instructions from parents to children, under patriarchal supervision. Although there are good reasons for believing that Poland might have possessed a written language centuries previous to the introduction of Christianity and the Latin language, in the ninth century, yet no monuments of a written Polish tongue have been found older than the sixteenth century, if we except a few fragments of very little importance, as we have before seen. And, notwithstanding the darkness and doubt which necessarily brood over those early days of the unwritten literature of nations, we are dependent on these scanty materials of historical learning for much of our knowledge concerning the early manners and customs of the ancients, and from these scanty libraries many useful lessons may be learned.

Tradition, in its general acceptation, means any knowledge handed down from one generation to another by oral communication. This is the medium of communication for historical information before the art of writing is used; and reaches back through the centuries of antiquity, until tradition is lost in the still more remote ages of mythology. Historical tradition, although

it preserves for us much valuable information, rescued from the oblivion of by-gone years, yet it is liable to so many perversions and erroneous intermixtures, that the utmost caution is necessary in its reception. Every country and age involuntarily gives a coloring to facts, especially in the exploits of heroes and the affairs of love, to say nothing of intentional mis-statements, which serve the purposes of the ambitious. Some historical traditions continue to exist even long after the invention of writing and printing. By this repetition of hearsay, misrepresentations of facts and fabulous inventions creep into notice, and ultimately become widely repeated and believed, for the purposes of individual or party ambition, or on account of the air of credulity which falsely adorns them. It, therefore, becomes the duty of the historian to examine into the origin and credibility of every traditionary statement, the character and situation of those on whose authority it rests,—their means of information, and their character for veracity. The errors of tradition form one of the most distinguishing features between the religion of the Roman Catholics and the evangelical Protestants. The Catholic Church, by tradition, believes in what is called the *unwritten* word of God,—or, sacred truths communicated orally by Christ and the apostles, which were not written down, but, by the aid of the Holy Ghost, have been preserved in the Church from one generation to another. The principal sources of this tradition are considered to be the fathers of the church, who, it is conceded, introduced rites not found in the Bible, such as the pardon of sins by the priests, the selling of indulgences for future crimes, and the observance of certain rites and ceremonies of the Church, and other fundamental articles of their faith. The Catholics ascribe to their tradition divine authority, and, therefore, incorporate it as a fundamental

principle of their dogmatics. They believe and avow that the Church has always continued in possession of the traditionary revelation of the Holy Ghost, which the apostles enjoyed, and that this revelation or belief of the Church is ascertained by the decrees of the ecclesiastical councils, the concurrence of the fathers of the Church, and the decrees of the Popes. The Bible is adopted as a rule of faith by the Catholics, to be explained and understood according to the traditions and constitutions of the Church. This blind, credulous reverence for tradition, is taught in all Catholic catechisms, and is the foundation on which they build their religious rites and hopes of eternal salvation. The Protestant Church, on the other hand, rejects all this venerable tradition not found in the Bible, and rests its eternal hopes on the doctrines and revelations of the Sacred Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. The folly of the former in trusting such important interests to the uncertainties and dangers of tradition, and the wisdom of the latter in relying upon unerring records, very clearly illustrate the wide difference and comparative merits of traditional and recorded literature.

The traditionary literature of the Poles, so far as its most serious errors are concerned, is confined principally to their Pagan religion, and the divine origin and authority of their nobility; and to these fatal delusions may be traced, directly or indirectly, all their national misfortunes. All the idle dreams of the aristocracy of their divine origin and infallibility; their right to rule, with the power of life and death, over the masses; their mad democracy, which recognised no accountability to any power but their gods, turned their brains with an egotism as unwise as it is disastrous. This traditionary literature, no less

dangerous than foolish, may be distinctly traced through all their history, as one of the principal causes of their national ruin.

The earliest dawnings of the traditionary literature of a people are their popular songs and melodies. They grow up with their language; and, as Gorres eloquently says, they are "like the pulse and breath, the signs and the measure of the internal life. While the great epic streams reflect the character of a whole wide-spread river-district, in time and history, these lyric effusions are the sources and fountains which, with their net-work of rills, water and drain the whole country; and bringing to light the secrets of its inmost bowels, pour out into lays its warmest heart's blood." Handed down from generation to generation by tradition, they must be regarded not merely as poems to be admired, but rather as the characteristic features of the mental, moral, and political condition of the people. They bring down to us many of the grey locks of Paganism, and, by their legends, thrilling tales, and impressive marks of centuries of past generations, point us to their Asiatic home—the cradle of their early existence.

The early literature of the Poles appears to be a mixture of Slavonian and Scandinavian learning. The Slavonic language, in its roots, and the words derived from them, strongly resembles the Greek, Latin, and Teutonic tongues, and is spoken by more than sixty nations, from the countries on the coast of the Adriatic Sea to the shores of the Icy Ocean, and from the Elbe to the Russian islands of the Pacific. The traces of early civilisation which the primitive race had attained, appear in all the Slavonic dialects. They were acquainted with agriculture, mining, navigation, and the arts of war; and the friendly intercourse which subsisted between the different cities promoted their civili-

nation. The Slavonic language undoubtedly had its origin in India. One of the Indian languages—the Devanagari—has fifty-six letters, the old Slavonian alphabet contains forty-six, and the Bohemian forty-two. The religious rites of the Slavonians resembled those of the Hindoos; and the women of both nations were accustomed to burn themselves on the funeral pile of their husbands. The Slavonian language, even to the present day, has preserved many roots of Indian origin; and learned travellers in those countries, familiar with both languages, in modern times are able to understand the Hindoos as far as to Cochin-China, and converse with them intelligibly.

The Slavonian dialects are divided into two great classes. To the first belong the Russians, Illyrians, Montenegrins, Bulgarians, Servians, Bosnians, Dalmatians, Croatians, and the Wends in Carniola, Carinthia, Stiria, and in the country of Eisenburg. The second class embraces the Bohemians, the Moravians, the Slowacs of Hungary, about four millions, the Upper and Lower Lusatians, the Silesians, and the Poles.*

It is unfortunate for Slavonian literature that no single dialect has prevailed as the dominant literary language of the people; and several dialects have become written languages in consequence of the great extent of country over which the Slavonic race has settled, and the great diversity of their political and religious institutions. When we consider that the Slavonians were the first who were overrun and subdued by the invading barbarians, it is surprising that they preserved their national character, and flourished at so late a period. They received the first shock of the Tartars, Huns, and Turks, who ravaged the

* Encyclopædia Americana, XI., 226, 270; Idem, X., 208; Malte Brun, IV., 373; Idem, VI., 641, 642.

country at a very early period. The Slavonians of Prussia, Brandenburg, Pomerania, Saxony, Altenburg, Misnia, and Silesia, lost their nationality after a long and obstinate resistance; and, at length, Frederick of Brandenburg, under the penalty of death, prohibited the further teaching of the Slavonic language, and introduced the German by force. But the Lusatians still preserve their language and manners somewhat distinct, although the primitive Slavonic tongue is extinct. It was divided into two principal dialects—the Antian or Antes, or eastern Slavonians; and the Slavonian, or the western Slavonians. Three branches belong to the Antian stock—the Russian (including the Great and Little Russian), the Servian, and Croatian; while to the Slavonian belonged the three branches of the Bohemian, the Servian, and the Polish dialects. The Slavonians were the first of the European races who translated the Bible into their mother tongue.

The ancient Russian and Polish languages contain considerable valuable literature. The Servian, or Illyrian language, has recently been cultivated. The Slavonic dialects of Bosnia and Bulgaria differ very little from the Servian; and the Bohemian is very similar to the Carinthian or Wendish dialect, and the Slowac in Moravia. The Wendish language, in Lusatia, is a mixture of Polish and Bohemian, except in Lower Lusatia, where it differs both from those and from the Servians.

The Bohemian dialect has reached a high degree of cultivation. The Slavonian language and literature of modern times has several divisions. The south-eastern Slavonian, embracing, first, the old Slavonian or ecclesiastical language; second, the Russian language and literature; third, the literature and language of the Slavo-Servians of the Greek Church; fourth, the

language of the Catholic Slavo-Servians, and the literature of Ragusa; fifth, the Wendish language and literature, including Lower Carniola, the principal district. The north-western Slavonic comprises, first, the Bohemians or Czechs; second, the Slowacs in Hungary; third, the Poles; and fourth, the Sorbians, or Wendes, in Lusatia.

Scandinavian or old Norse literature, which is intimately connected with ancient Slavonic learning, includes the early literature of the nations of Norway, Sweden, and Iceland, previous to their conversion to Christianity. Their learning reaches back as far as the earliest history of the North, and comes down as late as the period when the last darkness of heathenism vanished before the light of Christianity. The inhabitants of Scandinavia were known to the ancient nations of the south of Europe only by vague rumor. Tacitus speaks of the Suiones or Swedes, merely as a naval people; and Pliny barely mentions a peninsula called Nerigon, or Norway in Swedish, and Norrige, or Norge in Danish. Many learned antiquarians suppose Iceland to be the Thule of the classic writers. But the name Danes is first recorded by Gregory of Tours, in the sixth century of the Christian era. Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Jutland, were inhabited in the earliest times of northern history by Teutonic people and nomads of Finnish descent. If we credit Münter, Rask, Magnussen, and others of reputed probity, the Scandinavians and the people of South Germany have a common origin with the Pelasgian, Persian, and Indian tribes. The nations of Jutland and Sleswick became formidable to the Romans under the name of Cimbri, as early as one hundred years before Christ. About two hundred and fifty years after the Christian era, commences the fabulous history of Odin, Othin, or Woden. Very little was

known of Scandinavia, until the middle of the ninth century, when the fearless expeditions of the natives into the southern and western parts of Europe, and the introduction of Christianity among them, about the year one thousand, introduced this northern region to the literary world.

At this period the Scandinavians existed in hordes like the Tartars. In the ninth and tenth centuries these wandering tribes were known to the world as the most formidable pirates. They were known to the western historians by the name of Danes and Normans; and in the English annals of the same period, they are called Easterlings; the Russians styled them Varangians; and the Hispano-Arabic writers notice them as Mantchoos. These piratical hordes from Norway, Sweden, the Danish Islands, Sleswick, and Jutland, sailed to near and distant harbors, within and without the Baltic, as far as to Plotsk, Novgorod, Kiev, England, Ireland, Holland, Germany, France, Spain, and Italy, plundering, destroying, founding and burning cities in their march.

Germany and England were converted to Christianity much earlier than the Scandinavians; and retain no relicts of heathenism, and, of course, the early literature of old, heathenish Scandinavia and Slavonia, possesses peculiar interest to the antiquarian. The early versification of the Teutonic nations, so distinct in its character from all the other western nations, and their rude mythology, which in rich invention strongly resembles the mythology of Greece, has come down to us in the old Norse literature. The poetry, mythology, the antiquities found in the Runic monuments, and the existing code of laws, all furnish rich and ample materials for the study of the early Pagan literature of old Scandinavia. Tacitus, Julius Cæsar, and Lucan each

made some valuable contributions concerning Scandinavian mythology; and, in the eighth century, native authors recorded their national traditions for the benefit of the learned.

The days of the week were named by them, at an early period, after their gods, Tyr, Woden, Thor, and Freya; and hence we find, in the reign of Charlemagne, their names had become so well settled, that he only gave new names to the months, without altering the names of the days of the week. Saxo Grammaticus, a Dane, was distinguished in the last of the twelfth century; and his sixteen books of the Historia Danica are valuable productions. Till the invention of the art of printing, the literature of Scandinavia was little known in Europe. The important discovery by Arngrim Jonson of a parchment manuscript of the prose Edda, or the younger Edda, composed by Snorre Sturleson, formed a new era in the history of Scandinavian literature. Jonson sent this manuscript to the celebrated physician Ole Worm, in September, 1628, which is now preserved in the library of the university at Copenhagen, with its appendix, the Scallda.

Bryngulf Svenson, another Icelander, ten years after, discovered a second parchment manuscript of the prose Edda; and also a parchment manuscript of the poetical Edda; both of which were deposited in the royal library at Copenhagen. In the year 1665, Peter Resen, or Resenius, published specimens of the poetical Edda, and the whole prose Edda. These Eddas, or remains of old northern literature, contain the early history of the country, their mythology and religion, their wars, their sovereigns, manners, customs, and literature, under the garb of fiction and poetry; much of which, by tradition or otherwise, was mingled with the early literature of Poland, and the Slavic nations generally. The Scandinavian ingredients, which have

been mingled with Polish literature, by the union and conquest of the several nations, form a more appropriate subject of antiquarian research, than for a philosophical history; and we, therefore, decline to pursue it.*

The traditionary annals of Poland claim a very high antiquity; even as far back as Lech, the great-grandson of Noah. But the most ancient records found in the national archives, are a memorandum of a private family-agreement, dated 1088; and a bull of Pope Clement III., which was issued near the end of the twelfth century. The monks who introduced Christianity into Poland, not far from the commencement of the tenth century, were the first citizens who could read or write, and made historical records. Previous to the writings of the monks, the annals and learning of the country were preserved by tradition and the songs of the bards; and the same is true of the early literature of all nations.

Section IV.

SECOND PERIOD.

Although the history of Polish literature does not properly commence before the close of the third period, yet we must not overlook the important fact, that the cultivation of their literature commenced with the beginning of that period, and some traces of it are to be found as early as the middle of the second period. The only remaining vestiges of their original, and perhaps oriental language, are the names of places and persons, and some few Polish words scattered through the Latin documents of the times, destitute of orthographic rules, and therefore frequently almost

* Encyclopædia Americana, XI., 226; Malte Brun, VI., 639.

unintelligible. The ravages of time have spared an ancient Polish war-song, which is now in existence, written by Adalbert, a Bohemian by birth, and bishop of Prague, at the end of the tenth century, who was murdered at the altar by Boleslas. But Rakowiecki, a distinguished Slavic philologist, thinks this song, or perhaps more properly a hymn, in its present form, is not older than the fourteenth century; but is probably a copy of a much older document. This remarkable song, called Boga Rodzica, composed by one of the most distinguished Polish saints, is a war-song, because the Poles always sung it with great animation when advancing to battle. The spirit of it is a prayer to the Virgin for protection, victory, and salvation; ending with a sixfold amen. It is the subject, and not the poetry, which gives it importance. This hymn is still sung in the churches at Kola and Gnesen, the towns where St. Adalbert lived and died. Niemcewicz, who published it, states that he heard it sung in 1812, in the church at Gnesne.

All the remaining literature of this period was written in Latin, including several historical works of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, besides a few unimportant documents, and an anonymous biography of Adalbert. Martin Gallus, a Frenchman, who flourished between 1110 and 1135, is regarded as the oldest Polish historian. The bishops of Cracow, Mathew Cholewa, and Vincent, son of Kadlubec, who died in 1223, wrote other chronicles of Poland; and similar productions were written by Bogufal, bishop of Posen, nearly twenty years later, and by Godzislav Baszko, about thirty years after. A history of the Popes and Roman emperors, issued from the pen of Strzembski, about the middle of the thirteenth century. Duke Boleslas, the son of Miecsylas, in 1008, invited Benedictine monks to Poland, who

established convents at Sieciechov and Lysagora, in connection with schools. At later periods other religious orders pursued a similar course; and this accounts for the fact, that the educational interests of Poland continued under the exclusive control of ecclesiastics longer than in any other European nation, except Italy. For several centuries the natives were excluded from clerical dignities and official privileges, and all the numerous monasterics were occupied exclusively by foreign monks; and even as late as the fifteenth century this exclusiveness was extended to foreigners.

This ruinous policy, of confining all literary institutions to foreigners, was the settled policy of Poland as late as the fifteenth century; and the rule received very little relaxation as late as the fall of the nation, in 1795. Pelka, archbishop of Gnesen, in the year 1237, authorized the priests to establish schools, and directed the bishops to employ only Germans as teachers, who understood the Polish language. Not satisfied with this impolitic dictation, the priesthood, in 1285, at the synod of Leczyc, went still further, and excluded all foreigners who were ignorant of the Polish tongue from their professorships, as ecclesiastical and literary instructors; and the same decree was renewed in 1357 at the synod of Kalish, more than eighty years after; and as late as 1460, a century after, we find John Ostrorog and others complaining that all the rich and most desirable convents were filled with foreign monks. The general character of these literary institutions will be more readily understood when we consider that these vicious and ignorant ecclesiastics, who controlled the educational interests of Poland for so many centuries, amused themselves by burning all the writings in the native language of the Poles they could find; and filled their

lectures and instruction to their pupils, who consisted only of the youth of the Polish nobility, with the worst prejudices and curses of the native language of their country. Besides the clergy of the Greek and Roman churches, many other foreigners, principally German mechanics and traders, settled in Poland, who lived principally in the most populous cities, and of course had very little influence on the literature and language of the country; except in Bohemia, where the foreign immigrants mingled with all classes.

Section V.

THIRD PERIOD.

The third period of Polish literature, which commences with the reign of Casimir the Great, in 1333, and continues to the reign of Sigismund I., in 1506, is filled with increased interest and importance. The world has produced but few princes who, like Casimir the Great, have acquired immortal fame, not by victories, conquests, and deeds of reckless daring, which generally form the halo of sovereigns, but by deeds of humanity, by improving the laws and government of his country, by educating, improving, protecting, and loving his subjects. His father, Wladislas, or Vladislaus Lokieteck, had been permitted by the Pope to resume the royal title, which the papal power had alternately withheld and conferred on the Polish monarchs, when it pleased his ecclesiastical holiness; and, under his reign, Great and Little Poland were for the first time permanently united. Casimir's illustrious reign was by no means destitute of political distinction. He added to his kingdom, by inheritance, the present

Austrian province of Galicia, which, together with Lodomeria, the present government Vladimir, was then known as Red Russia. Lithuania was also connected with Poland, as a Polish fief, in the year 1386, by the marriage of Hedwiga and Jagellon, which national union was consummated in 1569; and Masovia also became a Polish province.

Casimir's influence on the literature of his nation was more consequential than immediate and direct. He pursued a different course from Charles IV., of Bohemia, his cotemporary neighbor, in matters of literature. While Charles patronized and improved the native language of his country, Casimir neglected the vernacular tongue of his people, and left it without any material improvement. This humane prince, as early as 1347, laid the foundation of the high school of Cracow; but the regular and formal organization of this great institution bears date nearly half a century later. Casimir laid a more permanent foundation for the future culture of Polish literature, than any of his predecessors, by improving the general government, by giving his subjects their first code of laws, by organizing the first national Diets, by fortifying the cities, and protecting the slaves from the oppression of the nobility. With Casimir expired the noble race of the Piasts; who was succeeded by his nephew, Louis of Hungary, a prince of the house of Anjou, whose reign was spent in war, and in the total neglect of Polish interests, and, of course, afforded no facilities for literary culture. The reign of this tyrannical prince is distinguished for the extraordinary limitation of the sovereign power, and the ruinous extension of the powers and privileges of the Polish nobility. He continued his residence in Hungary, and surrendered the government of Poland principally to the corrupt management of a few nobles.

After his death, his second daughter, Hedwiga, was crowned, in preference to Sigismund, who was married to the eldest, Mary, because he refused to submit to the exorbitant demands of the Polish estates. The national tumults and factious nobility finally subsided on the marriage of Hedwiga and Jagellon, and the union of Poland and Lithuania; whose descendants—the Jagellons—reigned for nearly two centuries, during which time Poland reached the summit of her national power and glory. From the death of Casimir the Great to Sigismund I.,—the grandson of Jagellon and the fifth king after him,—Polish literature declined, but revived under the latter prince. The history of the Polish language commences between the close of the second and the middle of the third period; and without much violation of chronology, its cultivation commenced with the first printing-office in Cracow, in the year 1488. Previous to this, but a few scattered, imperfect fragments of the Polish tongue remain. Probably the most ancient monument of the Polish language is a translation of the Bible made by the order of Queen Hedwiga, previous to the year 1390, discovered in a convent near Linz, in Austria, in 1826, by the librarian, Chemel. This valuable document can be philologically and historically traced back to its origin, in the fourteenth century, after a long and severe literary contest, and was published by Kopitar in a complete edition. In addition to this venerable record of Polish literature, we have only an old manuscript of a Psalter, which the antiquarian, Thadd. Czacki, first supposed to be a fragment of the queen's ancient Bible, before named; and a few other ancient manuscripts containing portions of a Psalter, found at Saros Patak, in Hungary: but their age is doubtful. All other Polish manuscripts of those ancient times are mere fragments of documents relating to law-

suits, a few translations of old statutes, issued in Latin, the ten commandments in verse, a translation of one of Wickliffe's hymns, and a few other similar fragments of no importance.

In consequence of the adoption of the Latin alphabet, and other philological difficulties, the orthography of the Polish language was exceedingly embarrassing to the few and feeble authors of this age. They alternately adopted the orthography of the Latin, the Bohemian, and German languages; and these errors greatly multiply the difficulties of the more modern Slavic etymology. A remarkable instance of the difference between the ancient and modern Polish language, is found in a manuscript published in 1828, containing the memoirs of a Janissary, under the title of *Pamientniki Janozara*, containing the journal of a Polish nobleman, who was in the Turkish army during the siege and conquest of Constantinople, in 1453. The language of this ancient document was so different from the modern Polish tongue, that very few scholars could be found able to read it; and it was necessary to translate it from the old to the new language before it could be generally read by the Poles. This period produced several Polish annalists, who wrote in Latin, among whom are numbered Sig. Rositzius, Dzierzva, and John Dlugoss, bishop of Lemberg.

Section VI.

FOURTH PERIOD.

The fourth period of Polish literature dates from Sigismund I., 1506, and continues to the establishment of the schools of the

Jesuits in Cracow, in the year 1622. This was emphatically the golden age of Polish literature. The University of Cracow, which had been founded as a high school in 1347, and remodelled and organized into a university under Jagellon in 1400, after the model of the University of Prague, forms an important era in Polish literature. Though the most flourishing period of this institution was deferred to the sixteenth century, yet from its origin it afforded the Polish nobility the usual facilities of similar institutions of that period for a classical education. During this period the Bohemian language, which had previously secured a literature very extensive for that age, exercised almost a controlling influence upon the Polish language. Poland had but few clerical writers in comparison with Bohemia. It is worthy of notice, that in Poland the highest and most powerful of the nobility were always the leaders and patrons of all literary enterprises and institutions of learning, while in other countries the diffusion of useful information and learning was under the almost exclusive control of the clergy; not particularly as a body, but individual clergymen, who generally devoted their fortunes, talents, and time to the education and improvement of the people. The true solution of this clerical antithesis is, without doubt, the Polish nobility were jealous of the clergy, fearing that if their educational matters were confided to the ecclesiastics, their humanity would lead them to open the schools to the slaves or common people, who would ultimately be elevated by science and religion by the side of their tyrannical masters. Hence we find many princely authors of this period, as well as through the subsequent history of the country; while education in Poland was entirely confined to the aristocracy, leaving the ignorant, degraded

peasantry in their primeval barbarous state, without a single effort to relieve and improve them.

During this period of Polish literature, a few translations of the Bible and catechism for the people were made by some benevolent ecclesiastics, during the sixteenth and the commencement of the seventeenth centuries. But even these few volumes were useless to the masses, except in a few instances, for the reason that their education was too limited for reading the Bible in their vernacular tongue. The influence of Protestantism on Polish literature was not without its salutary effects, in a very limited extent, among the higher classes; though its useful reforms were much less visible in Poland, where the slavish masses had no means of enjoying the fruits of the reformation, than in any other nation where the doctrines of Luther were proclaimed.

During this period the Polish language was cultivated with the greatest care, and advanced to its highest state of refinement. Lexical, grammatical, and philological literature, occupied the most powerful minds and the best scholars of the age. Their grammars bear the names of Zaborowski, Statorius, and Januscowski; and Macynski compiled the first Polish dictionary. As a production of this period, may be numbered the first part of Knapski's *Thesaurus*, first published in 1621—a work of acknowledged merit at the present day. The language was now used by the best writers for a variety of subjects, in preference to the Latin; a circumstance which contributed much to its improvement. Polish orthography has always been by far the greatest difficulty in the cultivation of the language. The Latin alphabet is not able in many instances to express Slavic sounds; and the well-known harshness of the language arises partly from the manner of combining of several consonants, which can only be united

by intermediate vowels, in accordance with the well-known rules of European orthography. It has been a matter of regret by most Slavic philologists, that the Latin alphabet was ever adopted for any Slavic language, in preference to the Cyrillic; though the adoption of the former, accompanied with appropriate modifications and additions, harmonising with the peculiar sounds of each language and dialect, would have been an improvement in all European languages. Printed books were first used generally between 1530 and 1540, although printing was introduced as early as 1488, when the first printing-press was established at Cracow.

The first work printed in Poland was an almanac for the year 1490; and the first book printed in the Polish language was Bonaventura's Life of Christ, translated for the queen of Hungary, and published in 1522. Nearly every city which had a school of any importance, erected a printing-office during the second half of the sixteenth century. The general system of aristocratic education confined all the schools to the cities; while the unfortunate peasantry, excluded from the seminaries of learning, have remained uneducated and degraded—a most ruinous national policy, which never has prevailed in any other European country except Russia. And so general was the total neglect of the education of the masses in Poland, that a peasant who could read or write was considered a prodigy, and a dangerous man to the government.

In the year 1579, the celebrated University of Wilna was instituted. In 1794, the distinguished Chancellor Zamoyski founded another university at Zamosc, in Little Poland, which survived only a few years, and fell in the beginning of the seventeenth century. It was afterwards revived in the form of a large

gymnasium by one of the chancellor's descendants, and removed to Szczebrzeszyn. Several other schools were founded, principally by the Protestants, on a more limited plan than the larger universities at Thorn, Dantzic, Lissa, and other places. In the reign of Casimir, the son of Jagellon, the Polish language was first used as the language of the national court. Under his grandson, Sigismund Augustus, the public laws and decrees were published in the native tongue. As soon as the Polish language was used in the court, it necessarily became subject to the fashions and changes of the court. The influence of the French king, Henry of Valois, successor of Sigismund Augustus, was not felt during the two months he occupied the throne. But the reign of Stephen Batory, prince of Transylvania, the brother-in-law of Sigismund Augustus, who was chosen after Henry of Valois had deserted the country, had a widely different effect on the literature of Poland. Being a foreigner, he was in the constant habit of mingling his conversation and writings with Latin words and phrases, when he was at a loss for Polish words, which language he did not well understand. This habit was imitated by his courtiers, and had an unfavorable influence on the Polish language; which, although well established and generally cultivated, could not resist these foreign innovations, even as late as the close of the sixteenth century; and hence arose that intermixture of Polish and Latin words, which, under the influence of Batory's example and his court, debased the purity of the Polish language, as everywhere appears on its pages. This period was principally distinguished for the cultivation of history, poetry, and rhetoric; and all branches of science were generally improved.

Didactic authors were not equal in style to historians; and purely scientific productions were very limited. Like all other

countries where national resources are limited, and literature is in the bud, the talents and learning of the country are principally confined to empirical studies, including politics, military tactics, eloquence, and popular poetry, rather than to philosophy and abstract classical literature. Poland, however, never has been destitute of men who have cultivated the arts and sciences for the love and excellence of learning, irrespective of the practical utility of their literary labors; among whom may be named a few distinguished mathematicians, natural philosophers, and chemists. At the head of this class of Polish scholars should be placed Copernicus, who, though born of parents of German extraction, in the city of Thorn,—mostly inhabited by German colonists,—yet he was born a Polish subject, and educated in a Polish university, and his literary fame fairly belongs to Poland, though Germany puts in an equal claim. Next to Copernicus may be ranked other eminent natural philosophers of Polish origin, among whom were Vitellio Ciolek, who first investigated the theory of light, in the beginning of the thirteenth century; Brudzewski, the teacher of Copernicus; Martinus, of Olkusz, author of the new Gregorian calendar, which was not introduced until sixty-four years after him.

During this period, which was the formative period of the Polish language, all the principal scientific works were written in the Latin language; and this explains the reason why didactic prose did not reach that degree of perfection which distinguished the historical style. One of the most remarkable facts in the history of Polish literature is, that the classical languages and the vernacular tongue were cultivated with equal steps, without in the least interfering with each other. And the most eminent authors of this period, who wrote in the Polish language,

spoke and wrote the Latin tongue with the greatest ease and accuracy. So common was this native and foreign literature, that even in common conversation, the Polish and Latin languages were used alternately in the same sentences. Sigismund I. corresponded with his successive queens, Barbara Zapolska and Bona Sforza, in Latin, and used the same language in their common conversation. In the time of Henry of Valois, seldom two could be found among a hundred Polish noblemen who did not understand Latin, German, and Italian; and even the common people and domestics, who were in daily intercourse with the nobility, learned to speak familiarly in Latin from hearing their masters, insomuch that some authors have declared that in Latium itself the Latin was not generally spoken so well as in Poland. Casimir Sarbiewski had an extensive reputation as a Latin poet throughout all Europe; and many of the Polish poets were equally successful in Latin and Polish verse.

It seems to be a uniform fact and a general rule in the history of literature, that all nations commence their literary developments with the cultivation of poetry; even previous to possessing a written language. In Poland, classical and Italian literature is clearly marked on the pages of their oldest authors. It is generally conceded that Rey, of Naglowie, in 1569, was the father of Polish poetry. His principal work was the translation of the Psalms; and most of his productions were of a religious caste, principally in verse, besides orations and postillae. His most distinguished followers were the Kochanowskis, of whom John Kochanowski, in 1584, was the most eminent. This celebrated scholar and poet published another translation of David's Psalms, which still retains its classical reputation. His other poems are constructed on the models of Pindar, Anacreon, and

Horace, and possess the merit of originality. The works of this poet, which still rank high in Polish literature, were first published in four volumes at Cracow, between 1584 and 1590; and after going through several editions, they were stereotyped at Breslau in 1824. A few of the best verses of this sweet Polish poet are found in Bowring's "Specimens of Polish Poetry." Kochanowski has been compared to Horace, in his brevity and strength of expression; and in other classical respects he resembles Goethe. Poetic talent would seem to be hereditary in his family, for his brother Andrew translated Virgil's Æneid; his nephew, Peter, with still greater success, translated the immortal epics of Tasso and Ariosto.

Rybinski, as a lyric poet, ranks, in the opinion of some distinguished critics, with John Kochanowski; the former wrote both Latin and Polish poetry, and was created poet laureate. Simon Szymonowicz—sometimes called Simonides of 1629—was honored with a poetical crown from Pope Clement VIII.; and by his Latin odes he secured immortal fame in Europe, and gained the enviable name of the Latin Pindar. His Polish poetry consists mostly of idylls, modelled after Theocritus, Bion, and Moschus; but the nation only can appreciate the beauties and sweetness of their favorite poet, so peculiar to their vernacular tongue. The oldest edition of his Polish Pastorals now extant, was printed at Zamosc, in 1614; the last edition, together with other eclogues in the collection of Mostowski, was published at Warsaw, in 1805. Zimorowicz, the contemporary and friend of Simonides, has the same general reputation. Other lyrical poets adorned this period of Polish literature, among whom may be named Grochowski, archbishop of Lemberg; Czahrowski, Klonowicz, and others. The latter poet—sometimes called Acernus—was honored by his

countrymen with the title of the "Sarmatian Ovid;" but Bowring stamps his verses with the stigma of licentiousness. Among the religious poets of this period are found the names of Dambrowski, Bartoszewski, Miaskowski, Sudrovius, Turnowski, and others, whose hymns possess great merit. Nor was this age deficient in satires and epigrams, in both the Latin and Polish languages; as will appear from the inspection of the productions of the two Zbylitowskis, Pudlowski, Kraiewski, and numerous others. The great facilities for rhyming in the Polish language, induced many prose writers to make poetry the common vehicle of all their thoughts, in violation of all principles of good taste. Paprocki, of Glogol, a historian of reputation, wrote numerous and celebrated works on genealogy and heraldry, principally in rhyme, and his example was followed by several inferior authors, who did still greater violence to the immutable distinctions between poetry and prose.

History, which, in the arts of composition, ranks next to poetry, formed one of the most prominent features of this literary period. For a long time natural history engrossed the principal attention of the great scholars of Poland. Nor was moral history less cultivated both in the profane and sacred departments. Though most of the Polish historians of this period preferred the Latin language as the medium of their thoughts, yet their productions form an important branch of the Polish literature of this period. The first historical work printed in Poland, was a Polish chronicle written by Mathew of Miechow, body physician to Sigismund I., published in 1521. In addition to this historian, Polish history was enriched by the successive productions of Martin Kromer, bishop of Ermeland or Warmia, who has earned the fame of the "Livy of Poland;" Wapowski, Guagnini, an

Italian, but adopted, naturalized, and ennobled in Poland; and Piasecki, a Protestant; Koialowicz, who wrote a history of Lithuania, all of whom wrote in Latin. Martin Bielski, in 1576, wrote the first history in the Polish language. His chronicles of Poland, is distinguished for its beautiful style and profound learning; which was continued to the reign of Sigismund III., by his son Joachim. This work was first printed at Cracow in 1597, under the title of Kronika Polska; and the first part was republished at Warsaw in 1832, forming the sixth volume of the great collection of ancient Polish authors published by Galeszowski. Stryikowski compiled another Polish chronicle, which possesses more erudition than taste; who was also the author of several other works.

Other historians confined their labors to particular branches of history, and exercised their gifts in translating the Latin volumes of their own and foreign authors. Wargochi translated Julius Cæsar, and other Roman authors. Orzechowski was distinguished as an orator; and Januszowski, Blazowski, Paszkowski, Cyprian, Bazylik, and others, were not without literary reputation.

Eloquence, which ranks next to history, was cultivated to some extent during this period. The talents of the Poles, together with their tall, robust, beautiful, and commanding persons, with their musical warbling language, afforded them peculiar facilities for the culture of elocution, both in the forum of state and the pulpit. Czarnkowski, Odachowski, and Gorwicki of 1591, and after, were renowned as the best orators of the age. Pulpit eloquence was cultivated with great success, by Peter Skarga, court preacher of Sigismund III., who was distinguished as the Polish Chrysostom. Next to him may be placed Wuiek, a learned and eloquent Jesuit priest, who translated the Bible into the Polish

language. The sermons and orations of both these eloquent divines, together with numerous other theological productions, were deemed so valuable that they were published at the same time. Nor were other religious sects destitute of celebrated pulpit orators. Among the Catholics were Sanislas Karakowski, archbishop of Gnesen; Bierkowski, who was Skarga's successor; Bialobrzeski, Kuczborski, the Jesuit Rosciszewski, and others. The Protestants boasted of Seklucyan, the translator of the Polish Bible for Protestants; Koszutski of Zarnowec, Radomski, Gilowski, and Budny, one of the leading Unitarian divines, who also translated the Bible into the Polish language The sectarian conflicts, which agitated Bohemia and Germany during this period, were deferred in Poland to the fifth general period of literature; until which time Poland, under the powerful reign of the two Sigismunds and Stephen Batory, enjoyed religious repose.

John Tarnowski, a celebrated general, and Strubicz, and Cielecki, published works on military tactics. Herbart, Sapiehar, Groicki, Sarnicki, and others, published collections of statutes and laws. Several memoirs, written during this period, have quite recently been published for the first time. One of these publications was a chronicle of the first half of the sixteenth century, written by John Tarnowski, and first published at Wilna, in 1844. The manuscript had for a long time been considered as lost, but was fortunately discovered a short time previous to its publication.

During this period philosophical literature made some progress. The principal scientific works of Poland were written in Latin. The first author who used the Polish tongue for a scientific work, was Falimiers, who published in 1534, a valuable work on natural history and *materia medica*. The first medical work in the ver-

nacular language was written in 1541, by Peter of Kobylin; and the first mathematical book was published by Grzebski. Among other physicians, astronomers, botanists, and scientific authors of this period, we find Latosz, Rosciszewski, Andrew of Kobylin, Umiastowski, Spiczynski, Siennik, Oczko, Grutinius, Syrenski, Sirenius, and others.

Section VII.

FIFTH PERIOD.

The fifth period in the history of Polish literature extends from the organization of the Cracovian Jesuit schools in 1622, to the revival of learning, in 1760. The cause of Polish learning with this period commenced its wane. The golden age of science had passed during the last period. The immortal race of the Jagellons expired with Sigismund Augustus, in 1572, and Poland had now become professedly an elective monarchy, though, in fact, it always was such. Although Poland, by law, never was an hereditary kingdom, yet the throne was occupied uniformly by the descendants of Piast to Jagellon, and from Jagellon to the death of Sigismund Augustus, with as much uniformity as the kings of any other nation. Previous to this period, the Polish crown had been confined to the direct male descendants of Jagellon, though the descendants of the female and collateral lines occupied the throne after Stephen Batory, and in most cases one of the sons or brothers of the last king was elected. Henry of Valois was the first king of Poland who formally wrote his name under the celebrated *pacta conventa*—the constitution and fundamental law of the nation, which consisted only of the nobility.

Philosophy is too sagacious to pass by in silence the intimate and sympathetic connection between the general prosperity or adversity of the national government and its literature, which was so clearly developed in Poland during the fourth and fifth periods of her literary history.

The reader will bear in mind that Stephen Batory, by his superior wisdom and government, had for a long time calmed the discordant elements of his factious and treacherous nobility; and by several important improvements in the administration of justice—by erecting the superior tribunals of Petricau, Lubin, and Wilna, and by his successful arms against Russia, for a short time elevated Poland to its summit of national fame. But under his successor, Sigismund III., a Swedish prince, and nephew of Sigismund Augustus and of Stephen, commenced that aristocratic anarchy of the Polish nobility which operated as one of the principal causes in the fall of the kingdom. The jealous and ambitious nobles had gradually and rudely encroached on the rights of the sovereign, and by their numerous and improvident additions to the *pacta conventa*, reduced the power of their king almost to a level with their degraded slaves. They had reduced the rights of royalty, both as a sovereign and a private citizen, to a degradation which they would neither submit to themselves nor impose on their servants. He was not even permitted to marry without the unanimous consent of the Diet; and each member of that body, by resorting to the *liberum veto*, could prevent the marriage of a sovereign, or almost any other act of the royal pleasure. And, superadded to all this aristocratic insolence, was the act of 1669, forbidding the kings of Poland to abdicate without the consent of these noble tyrants. These abuses and invasions of the royal prerogative, of course

created a reaction on the part of the insulted sovereigns, in which all the neighboring kings readily participated as opportunity permitted; and thus commenced that long and bloody conflict between the sovereigns and the nobles, which finally terminated in the calamitous fate of the nation. While these internal dissensions and malignant strifes were raging and ruining the nation for a period of more than fifty years, the Poles still maintained, by the success of their arms, a national existence, and a commanding influence among the surrounding nations, to the astonishment of all reflecting minds—one of the most remarkable instances in the annals of nations and human experience, of the indulgence of heaven and the humanity of earth, in granting an ample period of probation for erring mortals to reform, before the fatal blow falls upon the devoted heads of those who are madly determined in the ways of disobedience. But at last the awful day of reckoning comes. Their ruinous strifes and mad ambition soon mingled with the rising power of Russia, aided by the provoked revolt of the Cossacks, in 1654, caused by the most wanton and wicked oppression, in connection with a new rival in the elector of Brandenburg, hitherto weak, but now rapidly advancing in favor with gigantic strength, together with the rapid decline of literature and the invasions of foreign powers—all conspired in the ruin of the once powerful kingdom of Poland. No sooner had literature begun to wane, after its meridian splendor of the fourth period, than the affairs of the nation all commenced a sickly, consumptive existence, which, like a fatal disease, terminates in death.

The diseased state of the Polish nation, which had already prepared it for the sympathetic action of all diseases both epidemic and endemic, subjected the body politic to the ravages

of the perverted and corrupt literature of Italy, which spread over all Europe at the commencement of the seventeenth century, and fastened its fatal grasp on Polish learning. The Jesuits, who made great professions for the love of science, seized upon the corrupt times as a favorable moment for their selfish and treasonable designs. Under the favorable auspices of Sigismund III., they very shrewdly and insidiously obtained the control of the colleges; and, after a severe and protracted conflict, obtained the mastery of the university of Cracow; and principally by their influence, the superior literary taste of the former period was superseded by the rude panegyric and disgusting bombast, which disgraced the literature of Poland through a subsequent period of nearly one hundred and fifty years. This bombastic style culminated in the reign of John Sobieski; and the tasteless panegyrics, which disgraced the triumphs and victories of this distinguished scholar and gentleman, were imitated by all classes under the control of his hypocritical and sycophantic courtiers. The fashion, which had been previously introduced, of mingling the Polish language with Latin words and phrases, now became more prevalent, and finally was carried so far as to transfer false Latin sounds to Polish words by means of Latin terminations. These perversions of language were soon followed by similar innovations from the French, German, and Italian languages. Not satisfied with these literary corruptions, the bombastic, Jesuitical taste of this sad age soon pervaded the whole Polish language, until its lexical, grammatical, and rhetorical structure and beauty, were sacrificed for the vulgarities of foreign idioms.

Nor were these literary misfortunes confined to classical and philosophical literature; but even the moral sciences suffered severely by these invasions. When all Europe was in commo-

tion by the religious strifes and persecutions of a former period, Poland was comparatively quiet, and became the asylum of the oppressed. But now the scene was changed. While the rest of Europe was calm, Poland was distracted with religious persecutions and theological controversies, which ended in the most cruel oppression of the dissidents. Under this state of excitement, the minds and feelings of all parties were so deranged that calm and deliberate reflection, so indispensable to literary culture, gave place to passion, prejudice, and persecution, until the literature of the day, debilitated, corrupted, and overwhelmed with superficial pamphlets, became a senseless and tasteless erudition, clothed in a bombastic, vulgar style, fit only for a semi-barbarous people. The literary and religious conflicts of the age gradually increased in bitterness, sophistry, and vulgarity, until the combatants found themselves arrayed against each other in open hostility, which resulted in the worst consequences, in violation of law, government, and common decency, unknown, perhaps, in any other nation. The Arians, or Unitarians, who for more than sixty years had been tacitly included among the dissidents, after the most cruel oppression from 1638 to 1658, were at last banished from Poland, without any reasonable or just provocation. At length the unnatural quarrel which had for so many years been making preliminary preparations, first broke out publicly in the Diets of 1717 and 1718, in the most disgraceful manner. In 1724 a quarrel arose, every way characteristic of the degraded age, between the students of one of the Jesuit schools and the Lutheran gymnasium at Thorn, which originated from the literary and religious strifes of the age. On a certain occasion when the Jesuits were in procession, a Lutheran mob intermeddled and committed some trifling excesses in the nature

of trespass, in consequence of which, the Jesuit Wolanski, in the name of his order, commenced a suit against the Lutheran magistracy of the city. This lawsuit by bribery, perjury, and corruption, terminated in favor of the Jesuits, and resulted in a tragedy of murder every way characteristic of the degraded prosecutors, and the corrupt age in which they perpetrated their deeds of infamy. All the Lutheran defendants were punished with the utmost rigor; and Rosner, the president of the city, together with eleven other citizens, was publicly beheaded, and all their property was confiscated for the benefit of the Jesuitical order.

The pernicious influence of the Jesuits was sensibly felt in all departments of literature, politics, morals, and religion, for more than twenty years; during which time, all the schools throughout the country were in their hands. All the institutions of learning which were founded by the Piarists, the first of which was established in 1642, and soon followed by several others by the same order, lived in a perpetual struggle for nearly a century in protecting themselves from the persecutions of these despotic Jesuits; until at last the Piarists triumphed, under the protecting care of Stanislas Konarski, one of the order, to whose talents and perseverance the sect were principally indebted for their victory. This unfortunate period of pedantic and licentious literature, after continuing under Jesuitical patronage for more than a hundred and thirty years, was finally arrested, principally by the influence of the learned and talented king of Poland, and several of his most distinguished noblemen, who were the redeeming spirits of this reckless and licentious age.

The theological literature of this period numbered among its authors Andrew and Adalbert Wengierski, who were Protestant writers. The Jesuits Pomakowski, Szczanicoki, Koialowicz,

Sapecki, Posinski, Zalkiewski, and others, produced several other works on various subjects of theology and education, besides collections of sermons and devotional books. Among the Piarists, Gutowski, Wysocki, Rosolecki, and others, were distinguished writers. Niesiecki, a Jesuit, wrote a biblio-biographical work of considerable merit, which is considered a standard work on Polish literature and history. Wiiuk Kojalowicz, also a Jesuit, translated Tacitus' Annals, in Polish, and wrote a history of Lithuania in Latin. Lexical literature received a valuable contribution from the pen of the Jesuit Knapski, in the form of a large dictionary, which still continues a standard work. Lubienski, archbishop of Gnesen, in 1740, wrote the first geography in the Polish language. It is generally conceded that Starowolski, who died in 1656, was one of the most productive and useful writers on various subjects of theology, history, and politics. Of the forty-seven different works of which he was author, fourteen were written in Polish, and the others in Latin. The Piarist Kola, Saltszewicz, Chodkiewicz, Niemir, and Chwalkowski, were geographical and historical writers of some distinction. Broscius was a distinguished mathematician and general scholar.

Poetry suffered more from the degenerate literature of this age than prose. Sam. Twarkowski of 1660, was, perhaps, all things considered, one of the most distinguished poets of this period, and was the author of several lyrical and epic poems, though his style was bombastic and impure. Next to him the critics have placed Vespasian Kochowski, the best lyric poet of the age. Gawinski was a productive author, whose Pastorals have been published by Mostowski, in connection with those of Kochanowski, Simonides, and other poets of distinction. Wenceslaus Potocki wrote novels, poetry, and epigrams, but his productions

were too licentious for commendation. To this list of Polish poets may be added Elizabeth Druzbacka, a poetess of some eminence; Dzwonowski and Opalinski wrote satires, and Bialabocki, prince Jablonowski, and Leszczynski, the father of king Stanislas Leszczynski, wrote several historical and didactic poems. Among the translators of this age we find Zebrowski and Otfinowski, who translated Ovid; Chroscinski translated Lucan's Pharsalia, and versified several parts of the Bible. The Dominican monk, Bardzinski, was among the poets of this period. Prince Lubomirski was styled the Polish Solomon, on account of his wealth and wise sayings. Prince Wisniowiecki distinguished himself by publishing whole poems without the letter R, because he could not pronounce it. Bratkowski, the author of a series of epigrams of some merit; Falibogowski Szymonowski, Ignes the Jesuit, Poniatowski, and others, complete the list of poets of this degenerate age.

Section VIII.

SIXTH PERIOD.

The sixth period of Polish literature, which commences from Stephen Konarski, in 1760, and continues to the revolution of 1830, is everywhere marked with the symptoms of the melancholy catastrophe of Poland. The vernacular language, shorn of all its beautiful locks, robbed of all its classical charms, stripped of its perspicuity, simplicity, and strength, was a precursor of the approaching dissolution. From 1750 to 1760, was a period of consumption and decay in Polish literature, which finally terminated in national death. The king Stanislas

Augustus, and his much admired prince Czartoryski, aided by several distinguished literary noblemen, conscious of the approaching fate of the nation, came to the relief of their waning literature; and their worthy labors, for a short time, gave promise of a speedy and thorough revival of letters. But it was too late. The seeds of dissolution, which anarchy and licentiousness had been sowing for more than a century, had taken too deep a root in the vitals of the nation, to be exterminated by the ephemeral efforts of the king and a few of his noblemen. Polish literature had mingled its feeble current with the overpowering and irresistible torrent of French literature, which, by its superficial thought and licentious style, gave a character to both nations, unheard of in the history of crime and moral infamy. And hence it is, that in the early part of this period, we find so little to admire both in the literature of Poland and France. The truth is, the ravages of the French revolution, and particularly during the reign of terror, stamped its stigma on the literature of both countries, as distinctly as on their politics, and all their institutions; a period of haggard wretchedness, which, in its consequences, will outlast the ages of time, and extend its influence into the endless periods of eternity.

The first periodical ever published in Poland was the Monitor; and, for a short time, under the patronage of the best scholars in Poland, exerted a beneficial influence on their language and literature. In addition to this, the establishment of a national stage, with distinguished and learned men at its head, for a short time, promised better things. But all these ephemeral remedies were inadequate to the virulence of the disease, until the organization of a national department of education, by the Diet of 1775, first brought permanent relief. By this last expedient, public educa-

tion was taken under the protection and patronage of government; the declining power of the Jesuits was crushed by the public arm; and their wealth, so unjustly obtained, was confiscated and appropriated for the support of public schools. The provisional schools throughout the several departments of the kingdom, were re-organised on a new and improved plan; and the university of Cracow was rescued from the destructive power of the Jesuits, and restored to its former rights.* But the misfortune was, that, amid all these literary improvements for the benefit of the nobility, nothing was done for the education and improvement of the common people; a fatal mistake in the government of Poland, and all other states, who neglect the educational interests of the masses. The lower classes for the first time obtained a mere nominal recognition of their civil rights, as human beings, in 1807, on the organization of the duchy of Warsaw, under the reign of the king of Saxony. But even these small favors were never made available; though in justice to Stanislas Augustus, and some of his advisers, it should be stated, that they used their best endeavors in the cause of humanity, and did much for the promotion of literature, and the general interests of their country; without much benefit, however, to the lower classes.

But the perishing condition of the country was past recovery. The unfortunate nation had now been the scene of violent political faction for more than a century, civil war followed, and foreign invasion succeeded; while the leaders of the several pugnacious parties descended to the lowest means, and most ruinous measures. Religion, literature, politics, and morals, all made

* The history and character of the Jesuits are contained in the chapter on Religion.

common cause of the work of extermination and death; and all mingled in the disgraceful melange of civil war and domestic carnage. The fanaticism of the bishops of Cracow and Warsaw refused the dissidents their natural, civil, and religious rights—a conflict which afforded Russia the first pretext for intermeddling with the Polish government, with the secret intention of dismembering the kingdom at no distant day; which nefarious purpose was executed on the first favorable opportunity. During this state of things, and after the lapse of a few years, Poland, as the natural consequence of her own ruinous policy, was shivered to atoms; while the artful Catharine II. interposed her dictation, as though she was dealing with a nation involved in such irrevocable ruin, that "one needed only to stoop in order to pick up something." During these last death-struggles of Poland, literature seemed to revive under the powerful effects of the mental anguish and excitement which betokened the speedy downfall of the nation. But like all death-scenes, a relapse soon followed; and after twenty years of mental, physical, and political agony, the country, with her literature and national institutions, for more than twelve years, sank into a state of lethargy and mental imbecility, the invariable consequences of such disastrous causes.

From 1795 to 1807 the historian finds nothing in the literature of the country except squalid poverty and perverted taste. Translated literature made some progress, while philology suffered severely in its purity. The feeble government of the duchy of Warsaw, sensible of the literary wants of the country, adopted a wiser and more humane policy, and for the short period of five years, from 1807 to 1812, used her best endeavors to resuscitate their expiring literature. Under this government, the number of

schools was increased from one hundred and forty to six hundred and thirty-four; a royal commission issued for publishing new and appropriate school books in the Polish language; and other means were used for the promotion of science and literature. These laudable efforts were recognised and favored by the constitution of the new kingdom of Poland, in 1815. But the efforts of this limited government were inadequate to meet the wants of the once extensive, though now broken and ruined, kingdom of Poland. For it must be remembered that the new and modern Polish government embraced only about one sixth part of the extensive territory which composed the old Polish nation under the Jagellons. Previous to the cessions at Andrussov, in the year 1667, the former kingdom contained sixteen millions of inhabitants; while the census of the modern duchy, in 1818, numbered only 2,734,000; although in 1827 the population had increased to 3,505,000, under the Russian administration, in consequence of the encouragements to foreign colonists, the establishment of manufactures, which furnished means of subsistence to the lower classes and slaves, and other similar means resorted to by the Russian government.

But in Poland, as in all other nations where civil society exists only in the miserable antithesis of nobility and slavery, literature, true to its democratic and liberal spirit, began to change hands, by passing from the aristocracy to the democracy of the free citizens generally; and for a short time, by means of a partial emancipation, the schools were opened to the peasants under the more wise and humane administration of Alexander. And had his principles and promised reforms been carried out in good faith, under his liberal constitution which he gave the Poles, their sad condition would have been in a great measure amelio-

rated. It is not to be denied, however, that the Poles, since 1800, have made more progress in social improvement than during their whole previous national existence. But this advancement is to be attributed rather to the increased efforts of the Poles themselves, than to any favorable influence arising from the conquest, or the unjust conquerors; and therefore furnishes no argument in justification of the dismemberment of the nation. For we have already seen that the Poles, sensible of their fatal policy, had adopted a new and improved constitution, and taken vigorous measures of reform, for the last ten years previous to the dissolution of the republic; and had the invading conqueror left them unmolested in their improvements, they might have been far in advance of their Russian, Austrian, and Prussian neighbors, notwithstanding the boasted supremacy of the victors.

One of the most humane laws of the duchy of Warsaw, as early as 1807, was the partial emancipation of the serfs, including the whole peasantry, which was confirmed in 1815, when the new kingdom of Poland was established. It is stated by some writers, that the Polish serfs were not regular slaves, because they could not be sold as mere goods and chattels, separate from the lands of their masters, which they occupied, and had no right to leave. Nor was it any material improvement in the condition of the Polish slaves, that by one of the statutes of Casimir the Great, promulgated in the fifteenth or sixteenth century, they were allowed to sell their little personal property and select new masters when they were ill-treated. These and other impracticable privileges, instead of affording them any permanent relief, left the peasantry the most miserable of human beings.* The National Diet in this period was improved, by

* Poland under the dominion of Russia, Boston, 1834.

admitting representations from the nobility, the government, the cities, and smaller communities; and all Christian denominations enjoyed equal political rights. The University of Warsaw was founded in 1818, in addition to that of Cracow, Wilna, and Lemberg. In the Lemberg University, all its professors are Germans; and the lectures and instructions are delivered in Latin or German. It is confined to the three faculties of philosophy, theology, and law. It has a preparatory school for medicine, which is finished at Vienna. In 1832 it had sixty-five medical students, forty of whom were Jews. In the same year, the whole number of students in the university was 1291. A previous preparation of two years in philosophical studies is required, before entering on the theological and judicial courses, which occupy each four years; making in all, a regular course of an Austrian student to embrace six years. It was attempted to Germanize the University of Cracow by the same measures, during the Austrian administration; but in 1815, when Cracow became a free city, it discharged all its German professors, and again became a Polish university.

In 1827 the kingdom of Poland, in each of its eight waywodeships, contained a palatine school, besides three other institutions for the higher branches of education; fourteen principal department-schools, and nine for sub-departments; several professional seminaries for miners, teachers, agriculturists, and others; a military academy, a school for cadets, besides several elementary schools, both private and public. But all these universities, seminaries, and schools, afford very limited advantages to the lower classes. Nor do the parish schools, and the village schools, on which they principally depend, meet their wants. The Russian-Polish provinces, including that part of Poland united to

Russia in the three successive dismemberments of the nation, enjoy all the means of education with the Russian masses generally, which are very limited; as Russia is little better than a nation of slaves. But in the province of West-Prussia, and the grand duchy of Posen in the Prussian kingdom, where the government has wisely bestowed great care on the education of the common people, the Polish subjects are better educated. In 1819 the Austrian kingdom of Galicia had two lyceums, twelve gymnasiums, and several other literary institutions, besides numerous elementary schools.

In 1827, Poland had more than sixty printing-offices, and at least twenty booksellers. At Warsaw, where fifteen of the twenty presses were located, five daily political papers, and one weekly, were published in the Polish language; and besides these, Cracow, Lemberg, Wilna, Posen, and St. Petersburg, each published a paper. Other scientific periodicals were published at Warsaw; but in the other cities, the German publications are principally read. The national institution at Lemberg published an important periodical in the Polish language, which is named after Count Ossolinki. The Poles, since the partition of the kingdom, have strenuously resisted all encroachments on their language by the victors; and sensible that the Polish language was their last national tie which binds them together, have formed several learned societies, and particularly the society of the friends of science of Warsaw, supported by the most eminent men of the nation. Several academies for the arts and sciences, and other literary associations, have been founded; all of which have exerted a favorable influence in sustaining the Polish language, which Russia, Austria, and Prussia have been over-anxious to

destroy, and supersede by Russian, German, and French philology.

The general prevalence of French manners and etiquette among the Polish nobility, their general use of the French language, and their education in France, were unfavorable to the culture of the Polish language; and the universal dominion of the French language, which for more than half a century prevailed throughout Europe, had unlimited sway in Poland, and contributed much in adulterating Polish philology, and exercised an unfavorable influence over Polish literature. The poetry of Europe generally suffered from the French language, which does not seem to be a favorite tongue with the muses. The unnatural amalgamation in the manners of the French nobility, strangely compounded of French gracefulness, and the rude daring heroism of the luxurious Asiatic knight, and Eastern despotism, mingled with the disgusting witticisms and bizarre costumes of the middle ages, everywhere stamped themselves on Polish literature. The Polish authors, all belonging to the nobility, who had been familiar with the French language from infancy, unanimously disfigured their vernacular language by Gallicisms, and thereby injured the beauty and euphony of Polish poetry. And the servile Poles, long after Europe had abandoned the cold, formal, skeleton language of France, and resorted to their native tongues, continued and still continue their barbarous Gallicisms; and hence the saying of the modern Polish author Wilwicki, who styles the Polish literature of this period "a second edition of the French, with inferior types and on worse paper."

The literature of this period opens with that distinguished Polish author, Stephen Konarski, who was born in 1700, and died in 1773. This distinguished and eminent scholar, as early as his

seventeenth year, entered the order of Piarists, and afterwards became a professor in the college of the congregation at Warsaw. After a long absence in Italy and France, he returned to Poland; visited Lorrain with King Stanislas Leszczynski, and again returned to his native country, where he founded several institutions for education in Warsaw, Wilna, and Lemberg, on principles differing widely from the Jesuit colleges. In 1747 he visited France a third time, and again returned after three years; where he devoted most zealously the remainder of his life to reforming and improving the waning literature of his unfortunate country. His printed works, numbering twenty-eight in all, fourteen of which are in Polish, embrace different subjects in poetry and tragedy; and several of his most important productions contain also valuable treatises on politics and education. So far as we know, his works have never been collected; but they are all enumerated in Bentkowski's History of Polish Literature. This lion-hearted reformer was the first who had the courage to publicly and fearlessly assail the pernicious *liberum veto*.

Next in the history of Polish literature of this period, should be recorded the name of that illustrious philosopher, Stanislas Leszczynski. He wrote most of his works on politics and ethics in French; and in the Polish language he published a history of the Old and New Testaments in verse; besides other works in his native tongue. This distinguished king of Poland had the honor of being associated with Konarski and Zaluski; the latter of whom founded a large and celebrated library at his own expense, for the benefit of the public. His mind was stored with an extensive erudition, and a vast amount of knowledge, secured by a most retentive memory. He wrote a large

number of Latin and Polish books on various literary and biographical subjects, and several poetical works.

Wenceslaus Rzewuski, waywode of Podolia, and contemporary with Zaluski, was a nobleman of high rank, distinguished for his patriotism and erudition; and surpassed all his contemporaries in critical taste. His translation of the Psalms is considered a work of great merit. The catalogue of the distinguished men of this period, is adorned with the name of that illustrious prince, Adam Czartoryski, the uncle of king Stanislas Augustus. As a patron of literature, science, and the arts, he had no superior. He was marshal of the Diet in 1764, when the odious *liberum veto* was abolished. As a statesman, he enjoyed the first rank; and besides his brilliant literary career, he has left the world several historical works published under his care and patronage, and several poems from his pen for the stage; all of which were distinguished for the purity of his vernacular language in which they were written. The noble family of the Czartoryskis have justly been styled the Polish Medici, in honor of their patriotism and their liberal patronage; which the several members of the family bestowed on talent and the literature of their country. Their beautiful and classical seat, Pulavi, which has been rendered immortal in history and song, was destroyed by the Russians in the late war, and its literary treasures carried to St. Petersburgh.

The family of Potocki is entitled to equal rank with that of Czartoryski in the literature of this period. In the seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth century, Count Paul Potocki and his grandson Anthony, were both equally distinguished for their talents and literary culture. The works of Paul were published by count Zaluski under the title of "Genealogia Potocki-

ana." The speeches and addresses of Anthony, which were considered as models both in style and matter, have been principally printed in Daneykowicz' *Suada Polona*. But the most distinguished members of this illustrious Polish family, were the two brothers, Ignatius and Stanislas Kostka Potocki, who established their fame as patriots, statesmen, writers, and patrons of general literature. Ignatius was a distinguished writer. He translated Condillac's logic as a class-book for schools, besides sustaining various other literary enterprises at his own expense. While he was justly celebrated for his unfaltering devotion to the educational interests of his country, he found time and means for the action of his benevolent heart, in the humane work of promoting the emancipation of the serfs; and died in 1809 a friend to his country, and a firm advocate of abolishing slavery. His brother, Stanislas Kostka, was educated in the same school, and cherished the same political principles; although he was less active in the struggles of the Poles during their expiring independence. Retiring to Austria, after the king had joined the confederation of Targowicz, he devoted himself entirely to his studies; in 1807 he returned to his country, and there, as president of the independent schools and education, used all his talents, means, and influence for the promotion of the literature and good of his country. When the new kingdom of Poland was founded in 1815, he was appointed minister of public instruction, and ever after was found at his post, as the leader and advocate of every patriotic and literary enterprise. His eminent oratorical powers secured him the name of *princeps eloquentiæ;* and in genius he excelled his brother, although his inferior, perhaps, in energy of character. His great work was published in 1815, on style and elocution; his translation of Winkelmann's book on ancient art,

was a work of merit, which he enriched by notes and illustrations, but did not finish it. In addition to these works, his eulogies, speeches, and essays, several of which were on Polish learning, published in 1816, all exerted a favorable influence on Polish literature. Stanislas Potocki has the reputation of being the principal mover in publishing the great work *Monumenta Regum Poloniæ Cracoviensia*, at Warsaw, in 1822. With these distinguished statesmen and scholars, must not be confounded their degenerate cousin, Stanislas Felix Potocki, one of the principal traitors to his country, and the advocate of its corrupt institutions and final ruin.

Hugo Kollantay, Count Straumberg, was a distinguished nobleman, an orator, and a political writer of eminence, who, in connection with Ignatius Potocki, published a history of the Polish constitution. Adam Naruszewicz, who was at the head of historical literature of his age, translated Tacitus, whose style seems to prevail in his original works. His history of the Polish nation has ever been a standard work, and never has been excelled by any Polish author in erudition, style, and philological conception. The six volumes published by himself, embrace the period from 965 to 1386, commencing with the second volume. He collected the materials for the first volume, which was to have contained the traditionary history of Poland, previous to the introduction of written literature, and intended to publish it afterwards, but his death prevented. The Warsaw Society of Friends of Science published it thirty years after his death, and engaged the principal talents of Poland in the continuation of this eminent work. In order to accomplish this desirable end, the future work was so planned, that each writer was to confine his labors to the history of the administration of a single king, and, finally, after

each part appeared, the society was to make a collection of the whole, and, if thought necessary, cause it to be re-written. Several distinguished men devoted themselves to this laudable enterprise, which has given rise to several valuable works. Among other things, Narussewicz had collected for his work a library of materials in three hundred and sixty folio volumes. Besides writing a biography of Chodkiewicz, the Lithuanian captain, and the history of the Tartars, he distinguished himself as a poet, and died, in 1796, of grief at the miserable fate of his country. Narussewicz was educated by the Jesuits, and belonged to that order until its dissolution, and died archbishop of Luck. He seems to form a connecting link between the literature of the fifth and sixth periods; partaking, in some degree, of the panegyric and flowery style of the past; but, in energy and richness, excels all his predecessors and successors. His complete works are found in the great collection of Count Mostowski, published in twelve volumes at Warsaw, in 1804–5.

Joachim Lelewel was another distinguished Polish author. He published a new edition of Waga's History of Poland, which had been used as a class-book in the Polish schools for more than fifty years. Lelewel, adopting a new plan and arrangement, divided the work anew, and re-wrote it in philosophical style, under the titles of Poland Conquering, Poland Flourishing, Poland on the Decline, and Poland Divided. His principal improvements are his philosophical divisions and conclusions, and his additions in relation to the legislature, statistics, and the cultivation of the country. He published several other historical works, besides several translations. His most celebrated works embrace his Primitive Lithuanians; the Condition of Science and Art in Poland, before the Invention of Printing; the Geography of the

Ancients; the Commerce of the Phœnicians, Carthaginians, and Romans; a History of the Ancient Indians; the Discoveries of the Carthaginians and Greeks; Polish Bibliography; Monuments of the Language and Constitution of Poland; etc. G. S. Bantkie contributed liberally to the historical literature of Poland; and particularly by his extensive history of the country, one of the most perfect productions of his time; the second edition of this profound and interesting work appeared in 1820.

One of the most brilliant literary stars of this period was the Jesuit Albertrandy. He was the author of several historical works and treatises; and, in the collection of materials for the further history of his country, his labors were most indefatigable and useful. He went to Italy, where he occupied his time three years in collecting a hundred and ten folio volumes of manuscript extracts, every word of which was written with his own hand. He then visited Stockholm and Upsal, where the most important manuscripts in relation to Poland had been deposited. The Swedish government very illiberally prohibited him from taking any extracts, although he was grudgingly permitted to read the documents; but Albertrandy's superior talents surmounted this embarrassment by his powerful memory, which enabled him to write down accurately every evening what he had read through the day, and by this remarkable expedient he added to his rich library of manuscripts nearly one hundred folio volumes.

Polish history received, during the sixth period, several other learned contributions from the pen of Niemcewicz, Bentkowski, Kwiatkowski, Soltykowicz, Surowiecki, Lelewel, Onacewicz, Counts Ossolinski and Czacki, and also Maiewski, Siarczynski, and others. The accomplished princess, Isabella Czartoryski, wrote a book of historical information for the common people, called "Pilgrim of

Dobromil." Miklaszewski and Falenski made some useful abridgments of Polish history. Turski rendered valuable services in the cause of history, by translating the memoirs of Choisain on the administration of Henry of Valois; and also the memoirs of Michael Oginski. Under the patronage of the "Warsaw Society of Friends of Science," Niemcewicz wrote memoirs of ancient Poland, and several historical songs, which enriched the poetry as well as the history of the day. In 1830, the memoirs of J. Kilinski, the shoemaker, and of Sierakowski, a butcher, who were distinguished patriots and leaders in the revolution of 1795, were published. Much valuable historical information may be found in the essays of the modern Polish periodicals Cajetan and Vincent Skrzetuski, Sowinski, Jodlowski, Bohusz, Count John Potocki, Count Berkowski, Prince Sapieha, and Lelewel, distinguished themselves in universal history. Several of Lelewel's works have been translated into French and German. The German edition of his History of the Discoveries of the Carthaginians and Greeks, published at Berlin in 1832, was honored by an introduction from the famous Ritter. Poland has not produced, to our knowledge, a single work of eminence on foreign or ancient history; the sole aim of their literature seems to be the promotion of their own national glory.

The period now under consideration contributed its full share in the improvement of the Polish language, by cleansing its vocabulary of foreign impurities, and by learned researches in relation to its origin and subsequent history. The learned Linde has produced several profound historical and philological works on Slavic literature, besides his comparative, critical dictionary, in six volumes, which has become a standard work. G. S. Bantkie, the well-known author of several interesting historical and biblio-

graphical volumes, in the German, Polish, and Latin languages, has published a Polish Grammar, and Polish-German Dictionary. A new edition of the *Jus Russorum*, with a critical preface and explanatory notes, has been written by Rakowiecki. Slavic literature has been benefited by a valuable volume from the pen of Maiewski. Szumski, Chrominski, Sowinski, Juszynski, Count Ossolinski, and Bentkowski, have published bibliographical works, and several learned books on the literary history of Poland. Several rich articles on Polish literature are contained in the works of Count Stan. Potocki. Previous to the sixth period, all the bibliographical works were written in Latin. Bentkowski's history of Polish literature, published at Warsaw in 1814, contains a catalogue of all works published on Polish literature previous to that time.

Polish elocution during this period reached its meridian splendor. The fine arts, and more particularly the department of elocution, are the creatures of the times, and are frequently cultivated as a work of present, urgent necessity. This principle was not without its influence in developing and improving the eloquence of Demosthenes and Cicero; and most undoubtedly wielded a powerful influence, in forming the orators of England, France, and America, during their successive revolutions and severe struggles for national independence. In Poland we see this controlling principle rapidly developing itself from the commencement of the elective kings—the beginning of Poland's downfall—to the final dissolution in 1830. Their talents, intellectual, moral, and physical, spurred by the pressure of the times, found a most congenial soil for the cultivation of Polish eloquence. The agonizing, intellectual struggles of these sad times, which tried men's souls to their utmost ability and endu-

rance, as they saw daily their beloved country perishing and bleeding at every pore—the violent combats between the friends of the country, for its preservation, and its vile enemies and traitors, who, Judas-like, sold it to the Cossacks for a few paltry pieces of silver—the anxious discussions of new measures of reform and improved political theories, called out all the latent talent of the country, and filled the constitutional Diet from 1788 to 1791, with an array of oratorical talent seldom equalled in any nation. The most distinguished Polish orators of this period were the Potocki's, Niemcewicz, Czartoryski, Sapieha, Kollantay, Matuszewicz, Soltyk, Kicinski, and others. Pulpit eloquence, as usual, waned under the blighting and immoral influence of corrupt political strife. The Poles generally preferred the Jesuit Lachowski, the chaplain of the last king, as a pulpit orator; though the German critics generally gave the preference to Wyrwicz, and more particularly, Karpowicz; and all hearers accorded to Szweykowski, Zacharyaszewicz, Prazmowski, Jakubowski, Szianawski, and Woronicz, bishops of Warsaw, the honor of eloquent preachers.

But the reputation of the modern literature of Poland, rests principally on their poetry, in connection with their history and elocution. Unfortunately for the Polish poets, they blindly followed the imperfect and obsolete rules of Boileau, and the French school, long after the rest of Europe had abandoned them, and adopted the better taste of Germany and England. The justly celebrated Naruscewicz is entitled to be enrolled among the Polish literati, both as a historian and poet. Besides his well-executed translations of Anacreon, and some of Horace's Odes, he wrote a tragedy entitled "Guido," and several odes, pastorals, epigrams, and satires. The most celebrated poet in the reign of

Stanislas Augustus, was count Ignatius Krasicki, bishop of Ermeland or Warmia, and afterwards of Gnesen, and known as the Polish Voltaire. Among his best works are found an epic called "The Wars of Chocim," and three comic epics, one of which, called *Monachomachia*, ridicules the monks in the keenest satire; said to have been written on the request of Frederic the Great, the patron and friend of the author. His countrymen have ever considered his great heroic epic as a standard work; but foreign critics, while they concede it to be a valuable historical poem, deny it the possession of true epic power and original invention. His minor poems are full of wit and sarcasm; and his prose shows him awake to the errors, follies, and misfortunes of his country. His best translations are Plutarch, and Macpherson's Ossian. As a poet, he belonged to the cold, formal, French style, which prevailed in the fifth period. The complete works of Krasicki were published by Dmochowski, at Warsaw, in 1803–4; and a stereotype edition was issued at Breslau in 1824.

If we credit some Polish critics, Trembecki of 1812 ranks with Krasicki, as a lyric poet. His principal poem "Zofiowka," conforms to the taste of that day, in which the contemplative and descriptive style prevailed, and has been translated by La Garde into French; though his imagination was more brilliant than his contemporary Polish poets. Szymanowski, of 1801, the author of several pastorals, secured reputation by his delicacy and sweetness; but their real poetical value may well be doubted. The principal characteristics of the Polish pastoral poetry of this age, are imitations of the French school; and seem to delight in portraying nature in all its virtuous, vicious, and licentious phases, without discrimination or good taste; while the pastorals of the

sixteenth century occupy a medium between the bucolics of the ancients, and the modern Italian and Spanish eclogues

Wengierski, who died in 1787, was a poet of some merit; though his style and morals imitate the French literature of that period. Karpinski, who was also a pastoral poet, adopted the German style, and ranks high for his talents and national style. His version of the Psalms, and his translation of Racine's Athalia, have never been excelled. The vigor and freshness of Dionysius Kniaznin has distinguished him as one of the best poets of the age. He received his education in the college of the Jesuits at Witebsk, and spent a part of his life at Pulawy, the residence of Prince Czartoryski, under the patronage of this distinguished nobleman, where he imprudently and unfortunately, like Tasso, became the victim of love for one of his lady patronesses. Some critics have compared his style to that of Burns; but his principal fame rests on a ludicrous heroic called the "Balloon."

Among the poets of the first rank in this period, are enrolled the names of Niemcewicz, Brodzinski, bishop Woronicz, and Mickiewicz. Julius Niemcewicz comes down to us with the triple fame of a distinguished politician, historian, and poet. He laid the foundation for his fame by his overpowering eloquence in the Diet of 1788–92, as the deputy of Lithuania. His name is dear to America, for the reason that, after having repeatedly raised his eloquent voice in the Polish Diet for the freedom of his country, he fought bravely by the side of his friend and brave general, Kosciusko, and shared with him the horrors of imprisonment and the fate of war; and after his beloved country had fallen with its noble patriots, he accompanied his great commander to America, where he became the friend and associate of Washington, whose life he afterwards wrote in his best vein of eloquence.

His eulogies on Washington and Kosciusko, are deservedly his masterpieces of elocution. His principal works are his "Reign of Sigismund III.," and his historical songs and dramas. Whatever he writes, shows him the same warm-hearted patriot, the same lover of human liberty, and a man of superior talents; and had he confined his superior genius to any one department of literature, instead of spreading it over the whole field of politics, theology, and general learning, he would have had but few equals in the world. Niemcewicz's works, to our knowledge, have never been published in a collected form. His historical songs were issued at Warsaw in 1819; which were set to music by eminent Polish musicians, some of whom were ladies; and, on account of their fervent patriotic principles, have excelled all other Polish songs.

John Woronicz, bishop of Cracow, and subsequently of Warsaw, was an eminent poet, as well as an eminent preacher. His dignified and lofty productions sing the historical fame of his country, except a few religious hymns. His principal productions are his "Sybil," in which his imagination calls up from their graves the ancient Polish kings, to weep over the ruins of their former prosperous country; and his "Lechiade," an epic of great merit. Casimir Brodzinski, of 1835, an eminent original poet and a distinguished translator, was one of the founders of the modern Polish schools of romantic literature. He first introduced Scott's works into Polish literature, and translated Macpherson's Ossian. He has generally been characterized as a poet of strong national feelings, which everywhere pervade his eloquent and warm-hearted productions.

Adam Mickiewicz, born in 1798, commenced his reputation as an eminent Polish poet, by the publication of three small volumes of miscellaneous poetry, first issued in 1822–28.

Soon after this he published his Conrad Wallenrod, a poetic tale, describing an interesting scene from the Polish wars with the Teutonic knights. The fourth volume of his works appeared at Paris, where his earlier poetry was reprinted in 1828. To this catalogue of Polish poets may be added, Gurski, L. Osinski, Molski, Tanski, Boncza, Tomaszewski, Okraszewski, Tymowski, Szydlowski, and Kozmian, all of whom have attained eminence in Polish literature. Jusznski, in his Dictionary of Polish Poets, published in 1820, describes upwards of one thousand four hundred bards, who at different periods in Polish history had sung the prosperity and adversity of their country. Homer has been well translated by Staszyc, Dmochowski, and Przybylski; and Dmochowski has done justice to the translation of Virgil. Dmochowski's translations are in rhymed-verse; and those of Przybylski are in the original measures. The last author has also translated Paradise Lost, the Lusiad, and several other valuable poems, whose translations show him a profound scholar, both in the original languages and his own native tongue. Staszyc has earned reputation by several valuable works on various subjects; and also endeared himself to his country, not only as a man of letters, but also as a devoted patriot. Okrascewski translated the Greek tragic poets; while Sienkiewicz, Odyniec, and others, devoted themselves to the translation of English works. Felinski, the translator of Delille and Racine, is esteemed as the most harmonious Polish versifier. Osinski, Kicinski, Hodani, and Krasznski, have enriched Polish literature by their translations of French authors. Minasowicz is favorably known as the author of fifty-three different works. Naguroewski also translated several ancient authors; and Karpinski, Naruscewicz, and Krasicki, rank well as translators. It appears that the literature

of this period excelled all others in the numbers and richness of its translations; and all the poets above-mentioned, with a very few exceptions, added to their original productions several valuable translations.

The Poles have been much less successful and fruitful in novels and romance, than in poetry; and their Russian neighbors have excelled them in this branch of literature. The literature of Poland, as well as that of all other nations, is a true portrait of their individual and national character. They excel in history and poetry, but entirely fail in prose tales, novels, and similar productions; for the reason that their manners, customs, and habits of life, which have been formed in continual wars and political strifes, furnish ample material for poetry and history, while the more peaceful, retired, and modest virtues of domestic life, which form the principal and most fruitful subjects for novels, have never been much cultivated in Poland. And for this reason the English and American novels, where domestic life is the purest and most extensively cultivated, are the best in the world. Domestic life, which is the true basis of this branch of literature, never possessed its real charms in Poland. The whole history of the nation is but a record of domestic and foreign wars; and in this bloody school and nursery of degradation, the whole nation has been trained to slavery, public life, splendor, and military fame, at the expense of the modest virtues of domestic retirement, and those female charms which so beautifully adorn the sex in the retired and useful circles of home. The same reasons have operated to the prejudice of the true drama, which is also dependent on domestic life for its richest and happiest scenes. Nor is this salutary principle confined to these narrow circles; but it seems to be a well-settled rule in the

history of all nations, that their literature, in all its departments, is rich or poor, flourishing or waning, according to the purity and progression of domestic society, and the social relations of life. Niemcewicz, the Polish Scott, in 1827 published his historical novel, "John of Trenczyn," which, however, possesses some merit as an imitation of his distinguished model. Other novels have been written by Skarbeck. But the principal work of this kind, which attempts to analyze moral character and describe fashionable life, is "The Intimations of the Heart," from the pen of the distinguished princess of Wirtemberg, and the daughter of Adam and Isabella Czartoryski. Next to her may be ranked, as a writer of novels, Clementina Hofmann, formerly Tanska, a lady of literary eminence and moral worth.

The Poles, with the exception of Count Stanislas Potocki and Ossolinski, L. Osinski, Golanski, and a few others, have never attained eminence in criticisms and literary taste beyond the narrow limit of their own national literature. Nor is this surprising when we consider that the prevailing passion of the Poles, and their peculiar failing, was their inclination to celebrate and exalt their own country, and the heroic deeds of their ancestors, without ever dreaming of the possibility of rivalship or superiority in other nations; and hence arose that feeling of national pride which led them to overrate their heroism, literature, and other attainments, and left them deficient in judgment and critical taste.

Philosophy, both natural and moral, as abstract sciences, as a medium of reasoning from cause to effect, never were much cultivated in Poland; and the same is true of all the other nations similarly situated and governed. Analogical and philosophical thought, the nursery of human freedom, and the origin of repub-

lican principles, has never been encouraged by tyrants, who shun investigation, and watch with jealousy every germ of free and logical reflection. In the beginning of the seventeenth century, Petryci translated into the Polish language the works of Aristotle, which contained all the philosophy taught in the Polish schools for several centuries, except a few imperfect commentaries on some branches of ethics and politics. Szianiawski and Jaronski, early in the nineteenth century, tried to introduce the philosophy of Kant, without success. Galuchowski, a German philosophical author, though a Pole by birth, and Trentovski and Ciesskowski were authors of some merit in philosophical science.

During this period Warsaw was the principal seat for the cultivation of the Slavic languages and polite literature; while philology and the exact sciences were principally pursued at Wilna. This learned university was distinguished for its elementary books and classical languages. Groddek, an eminent professor in this institution, translated Buttman's Greek Grammar into Polish, besides several philological works. Bobrowski and Zukowski, also learned professors of the same college, published a Greek and Hebrew Grammar. Senkowski, of St. Petersburg, was eminent in the oriental languages; and Count Rzewuski, of Vienna, was respectably connected with periodical literature.

On the erection of the new kingdom of Poland under the government of the Grand-Duke Constantine, whose partiality for mathematical science was so ultra, this branch of learning was cultivated to the almost entire neglect of moral and literary instructions. During this mathematical mania, which unfortunately continued through the whole of the sixth period, this department of science was ably taught by John Sniadecki, whose

style and language was not excelled in his time and country; and also by Poczobut, Zaborowski, Rogalinski Czech, Polinski, Twardowski, Konkowski, and others. Count Sierakowski published a work on architecture; and the Polish Jew, Stern, was distinguished throughout Europe for his inventions of arithmetical and agricultural machines. Andrew Sniadecki and Count Chodkiewicz were distinguished chemists; H. Osinski and Bystrzycki were able professors in natural philosophy, though it was less studied; while Kluk and Jundzill were famous in natural history, botany, and zoology. Until the middle of the eighteenth century medical science in Poland was exclusively in the hands of foreigners, principally Germans and French; and even as late as the close of the seventeenth century the Poles were so deficient in civilization, as to hold the medical profession in contempt.* At an earlier day they had a few eminent physicians, as Martin of Olkusc, Felix of Lowicz, and Struthius; the latter was invited to Spain to save the life of Philip II., and also the Turkish Sultan Suliman II. In more modern times, Poland has produced several skilful physicians, without as yet forming national schools for the benefit of the medical profession. Lafontaine was the body physician of the last king. Malcz, Dziarkowski, Perzyna, and others, stood well in their profession. Medical science has been most liberally patronized at the University of Wilna.

The history and geography of Europe show very conclusively that Poland was designed by the Creator as an agricultural people. It is the most extensive plain on the continent, covered with a very rich and fertile soil, well adapted for grazing, for fruits, grains, and all kinds of nutritious plants for man and beast; with a sufficient quantity of useful minerals for the purposes of

* Connor's History of Poland, 1698.

home consumption and a lucrative commerce; peopled with fifteen or twenty millions of robust, healthy inhabitants, well qualified for agricultural, mechanical, and mining pursuits. The literature of such a people would seem to demand most imperiously the cultivation of political economy, agriculture, mechanics, and mineralogy; and the neglect of these useful branches of learning may at once account for the misfortune of the nation, and the wretched condition of the masses—the invariable sequences of such causes. It was not until after some twenty of the first years of the present century, that the reflecting statesmen of Poland began to awake and direct their attention in sober earnest to national economy in its various branches. The false maxim of the Poles, which had ever prevailed among the nobility —the only freemen of the country—that all commercial and economical pursuits were degrading to their dignity, had paralyzed all their financial energies, and ruined the agricultural and mechanical interests of the country. Several societies have been organized for the promotion of agricultural science, which gave rise to several able treatises on those subjects, without, however, introducing any new theory or principles. Political economy has lately surpassed all other branches of moral sciences. Staszyc, Slawiarski, and others contributed valuable statistical works on Poland in the vernacular language. The "Geography of Ancient Poland," by Swiencki, and the "History of the Polish Towns and Peasantry," contain much useful information in relation to Polish statistics. Count Raczynski, in his "Journey to Constantinople and Troy," gives an extensive and accurate statistical account of Podolia and the Ukraine.

The period now under discussion made some feeble advances in forensic science. Jurisprudence, in all its departments, has ever

been neglected in Poland; and to this cause, in a great measure, may be attributed the national ruin. Poland Proper, since the organization of the Diet, has been governed by constitutions and statutes, sanctioned by the National Assembly, which had their origin in ancient usages, *consuetudines*, or in particular circumstances. The towns generally were governed by the code of Magdeburg. The ancient Lithuanian statutes, collected in 1529, prevailed in Lithuania, as they do even at the present day, except where it is overruled by a conflicting *ukase*. This code is sometimes called the code of Leo Sapieha, the sub-chancellor of Lithuania, who translated it from the White Russian into the Polish language in 1688. The several Polish provinces are governed by seven different systems of law, which prevail in the respective subordinate governments of the kingdom. During the reign of the last king of Poland, several laudable attempts were made for extensive judicial improvements; but were all crushed in the bud by Russian despotism. Among these contemplated improvements was the general code of laws, which was planned and prepared by the ablest statesmen and lawyers in the nation; but was unfortunately rejected by the Diet of 1777. After the government of Poland passed into the hands of Russia, preparations were soon made for the introduction of a new code; but the first part of the work, which was presented by the council of state in the form of a criminal code in 1820, was also rejected by the Diet. A portion of the civil code, however, was accepted in 1825; but the whole code which was prepared in 1830, perished in the revolution of that melancholy year. It has happened in Poland as in all other nations of similar laws, government, literature, and institutions, that remedial law, or the administration of justice, is a system of bribery, perjury, murder, and corruption.

It seems to be comparatively an easy task for any nation to enact a code of civil rights; but the difficulty is, to enforce them honestly and fairly. A wise and judicious system of remedial law, including pleadings, practice, and evidence, are found only in those nations where civilization, science, morals, and religion have reached their meridian splendor, as in England and America. In Poland two thirds of the judges of the lower courts are elected; and the other third, with all the officers of the higher tribunals, are appointed by the government. Until very recently, the professions of law and medicine were stigmatized as beneath the notice of a nobleman; although they were not prohibited by law, as traders were, who lost the rank of nobleman, as an ignominious punishment for the crime of "retailing by yards or by pints;" and the same disgrace attached to all those occupations which were the source of pecuniary profit. For a long period it was thought a matter of indifference for a nobleman even to understand arithmetic. But, in modern times, the study of law, under the instructions of Slotwinski, in Cracow, Bantkie, and Maciejowski, in Warsaw, has become more popular. The universities, in a very limited manner, taught the Roman law, both civil and criminal, as well as the law of nations and nature; though without any visible good effects.

That important branch of literature which is founded in foreign travels, has been very much neglected in Poland; which accounts for the great scarcity of books in this department of learning. Among the very few books of travels found in their libraries, are "Travels for the Purpose of Discovering Slavic Antiquities," published at Hamburg, 1795, by John Potocki; and, in later times, the "Journal of Travels to Constantinople and the Plain of Troy," by Raczynski, richly embellished with illustrations. The

last author published John Sobieski's letters at Breslau, in 1821; a very popular work, and generally read throughout Europe in several languages. The same author has published a whole series of memoirs, which are full of interest. Ljach Szyrma, in 1828, published a statistical view of Great Britain.

Section IX.

SEVENTH PERIOD.

The seventh and last period of Polish literature embraces the time from the Polish revolution, in 1830, to the year 1850. This important period in Polish history had been introduced by the tyrannical and inhuman provocations of Russian despotism, during the fifteen years which preceded it. This sad period in the annals of Poland may be regarded as the catastrophe of the national drama, the funeral of the Republic, and the crisis of European despotism. Russia had now determined to annihilate the last vestiges of Polish nationality, by destroying their universities, schools, and literary institutions; by burning and plundering the libraries, and by superseding the Polish language and literature with Russian ignorance and barbarity. The promised reforms of the Czars, and the liberal constitution of Alexander, granted on the earnest solicitations of Kosciusko, were now violated in bad faith; and the cruel wrongs inflicted on the Poles since 1815, mantled the face of the civilised world with shame and indignation, at the sight of the deeds of darkness and savage brutality which disgraced the Russian empire for ever. In addition to the numerous barbarities of the Russian despot, the

brutal conduct of the Russian generalissimo, and of his civil and military officers, illegally and unconstitutionally quartered in Poland, form one of the most revolting pictures in the world's history. And the base individual, the Russian tyrant, who authorized these abuses, whose life and heart's blood should have been the forfeit of his crimes, has never been looked upon by any human being but with the utmost disgust and abhorrence. The war of 1830, which those Russian barbarians so wantonly and unjustly provoked for several years previous, called into exercise all the mental, physical, and pecuniary resources of the injured nation; and, of course, as a natural consequence, arrested all literary and moral improvement; until after the final battle, which left little else than the quiet stillness of the tomb, the activity of the dead, and the general ruin of a nation's hopes, joys, and interests. As far as the eye of the soaring eagle can now range, nothing remains in the once beautiful, flourishing plains of Poland, but the smoke of burning cities, the shouts of the fierce Cossack, the corpses of brave heroes reposing in the slumbers of death, by the side of the mangled bodies of their wives and children, besmeared with the smoke and ashes of their burning mansions and humble homes; while their noblest sons who survive the shock, are wandering far and wide as prisoners and exiles. The blighting influence of such causes on literature and intellectual pursuits can be readily perceived.

The swan-like literature of this melancholy period, everywhere partakes of the solemnity and disasters of the times; and, perhaps, no surer index of the feelings and condition of a people, their prosperity or adversity, their virtues or vices, can be found, than in their literature. Men of grief, in almost any misfortune in life, may learn to keep silence, and thereby suppress their

feelings; but the pen generally portrays the heart in its true character, and the thoughts we cannot bridle, here force their way on paper, frequently against the prohibitions of the will. After a dead silence in Polish literature for about three years, 1833 closed with one small volume containing three poems, by Niemcewiecz and Mickiewicz, published at Leipsig, which were filled with the requiems of their unfortunate country. Mickiewicz added a fourth volume to his three volumes of poems, published at Paris in 1828, which partakes of the melancholy feelings of the disastrous times. About the same time, Xavier Bronikowski, the late vice president of Warsaw, published at Nuremberg his Polnische Miscellen in the German language. As the printing-offices were closed against the Polish literati at home, they were compelled to flee to Paris for the protection of their lives and their further literary pursuits. In the year 1832, from March to December, the fifteen printing establishments at Warsaw issued only sixty-three works, excluding all expressions of patriotic feelings. The universities of Warsaw and Wilna were broken up, and their extensive and valuable libraries were removed to St. Petersburg. The Russian autocrat openly and boastingly declared that, it was the settled and unalterable policy of his government to annihilate as fast as possible all traces of Polish nationality, and change the country, with all the Slavic nations, into a Russian monarchy. The tyrant prosecuted his wicked purpose by every possible act of infamy and abuse. The lower rudimental schools, as well as the universities and higher schools, were robbed of their funds and metamorphosed into Russian government schools; and, after being deprived of all means of collegiate education for several years, the Poles were permitted to found a new university at Kief, but on Russian principles.

Every where the people were insulted by Russian governors, officers, and soldiers; the manners, customs, religion, language, and national peculiarities of the country were abused and ridiculed, and forced to give place to Russian custom, language, and institutions. The union of the Greek and Catholic Churches was dissolved; and by this means thousands of their communicants were forced to join the Russian Church. Large and tempting prizes were paid to the higher schools for the best essays in the Russian language; and, not satisfied with all this, the Czar, in 1833, made a law, that after 1834, no Pole should be employed in the Russian service without a complete knowledge of the Russian language. These oppressive measures were most successful in the White Russian provinces; embracing Lithuania, Podolia, and Volhynia, which had formerly been under the Russian government before they were subdued by Poland, and are now inhabited by a Lithuanian and Russian peasantry, though the nobility is Polish; to which abuses, Ouwarof, the minister of the school department, tamely and cowardly gave his sanction, as appears from his report of 1839.

But, fortunately for humanity, tyranny—Russian despotism not excepted—never has been able to control the God of Heaven, nor change the fundamental laws of nature; and the unsuccessful experiments of the Czar to extinguish all national and patriotic feelings in the bosoms of the people, only confirm the truth of this proposition. True, there was for a time a paralysis of mental and literary activity, but it was far from meeting the expectations of the Russian tyrants; and things have been continually growing worse ever since. The national feelings of twenty millions of Poles cannot be annihilated by any earthly power; and certainly not by the short-sighted feats of Russian

barbarism, to say nothing of the gross injustice of Austria and Prussia. Since the fall of 1830, literary productions were few in proportion to the former productive periods; but a deep-toned feeling of national re-action and retribution has pervaded every Polish heart, developed in every page of their literature, which has been published, of course, by Polish refugees in foreign nations. Not more than one hundred and eighteen works of all kinds were published in the whole kingdom during the year 1837, all in Hebrew, except about seventy-five in Polish; about as many as a single house in England or America publishes annually. And although the press, and all other organs for the expression of public and patriotic feeling, were under the most rigorous inquisition and strictest watch, yet the history, the wrongs and restoration of Poland, form the principal themes of their persecuted literature. The history of Poland has been the peculiar study of every Polish scholar. Private libraries and ancient archives have been thoroughly searched for materials, and the undisturbed dust of centuries has been shaken from manuscripts and volumes, for the purpose of rebuilding the waste places of Polish learning. Professor Maciejowski's History of the Slavic Legislatures, is one of the most important productions issued since the revolution; although the German and Slavic scholars seem to consider it as an introductory work on that subject, until superseded by something more profound, which has, in a great measure, been supplied by another production from the same author, called "Contributions to the History of Slavic Events, Literature, and Legislation." The same author has published since, another work on the ancient history of Poland and Lithuania. About the same time a work by J. Hobe appeared, "On the Slavic Rights of Inheritance."

Monographic literature now began to increase rapidly. M. Balinski wrote the History of Wilna, and the History of Queen Barbara Radzivil. Zegota Pauli published the biographies of the Hetmans; a History of Posen was written by Lukaszewicz. The History of Lithuania by Th. Narbutt, and of Poland during the first half of the sixteenth century, by Maraczewski, appeared about the same time. Polish literature was also enriched by the works of Przezdziecki and Kraszewski, on the language and manners of the nation. A profound and useful book from the pen of Dr. Macherzynski on the history of the Latin language in Poland, contains a list of all the different editions of the classics published in the country. This interesting volume reveals to us the fact, that Cicero's works have been published there in certain portions or complete, at least in forty-five different editions; commencing as early as 1500, at Cracow. Horace also passed through eight successive editions commencing in 1521; Ovid has been edited four times, beginning in 1529, and Virgil's works passed through six successive editions, the first of which appeared in 1642.

The literature of this period has been further distinguished by the publication of ancient chronicles, for the purpose of giving them a more extensive circulation. One of them was published at Lemberg in 1844, edited by D. Zubrzycki; and another at Cracow by Macynski in 1845. Besides several works on Polish archæology, have appeared the "Historical Antiquities of Poland," by A. Grabowski, and the "Antiquities of Galicia," by Zegota Pauli. In 1847 appeared a valuable collection of historical documents; and about the same time, Lelewel, E. Rastawiecki, Ig. Zagorski, Poplinski, and count Raczynski, wrote several important works on numismatics, while some of them were in

exile. The last noble author has doubly endeared himself, not only to Polish, but to the general cause of literature, for his great exertions and liberal sacrifices in the cause of letters.

Church history, an important branch of literature, was entirely neglected until the present period. In 1835, a history of the Bohemian Congregation in Poland, appeared from the pen of Joseph Lukascewicz, which describes the Lutherans of the country; and in 1846 a history of the Helvetian or Calvinistic Confession in Lithuania was published. A history of the Reformation in Poland, in the English language, was published at London in 1838 by count Valerian Krasinski, who fled to England for refuge, containing an historical sketch of the rise, progress, and decline of the Reformation in Poland, and its influence on the literary, moral, and political interests of the country. Polish literature having been banished from the plains of Sarmatia, it of course followed the exiles in their retreats in the foreign nations who kindly gave them homes; and, therefore, a history of recent times could not be written in Poland. But notwithstanding all these embarrassments, Wisznewski has furnished a valuable history of Polish literature, and Trajanski has enriched the language with a new Polish dictionary. The year 1845 gave birth to several new volumes of interesting travels, by Kraszewski, describing the South of Russia; and also by Holawinski, which contains his pilgrimage to the Holy Land; besides a book of travels in Siberia, published in 1838.

In consequence of the final conquest of Poland in 1830, the literature of Poland was principally transferred to Paris, in the persons of the Polish emigrants, who fled there for an asylum from Russian persecutions. One of the first and principal works of this unfortunate class of citizens was Maurice Mochnacki's

History of the Polish Insurrection; which was followed by a fresh excitement in their native country. This author had been favorably known by his work on the Polish literature of the nineteenth century, and as the editor of several periodicals; and besides, he had fought bravely in the revolution; but unfortunately he had incurred the displeasure of his country by his political career, in which he had appeared to be the tool of the grand-duke Constantine in perpetrating his abuses on the Poles. Crushed by his misfortunes, he died in France, before reaching thirty years of age; and his writings were collected and published in 1836 by A. Jelowicki, a member of a distinguished patriotic family, who had fallen in the revolution. These fugitives established a printing-office at Paris, devoted to the publication of Polish works.

Wratnowski, in 1837, at Paris, published a history of the insurrection in Volhynia. A more modern work, containing a "Representation of the National Spirit in Poland," from the pen of Ojczyczniak, describes, with some warmth of feeling, his hatred of the conquering powers; together with a most violent philippic against those hasty, hot-headed Poles, who by their imprudence defeated the revolution. Another history of the Polish insurrection was published by S. B. Gnorowski, at London, in 1839, in the English language, which shows much prejudice against his countrymen who acted as the leaders in that premature rebellion, as he pleases to call it. Joachim Lelewel, whose literary fame adorns both the sixth and seventh periods of Polish literature, now lives at Brussels, where, in 1849, he published his great work on the civil rights of the Polish peasantry. The author, in this profound work on human rights, shows very clearly that Polish slavery was greatly

increased, and the condition of the peasants was rendered much more degraded, by the introduction of the Christian religion of the Greek and Catholic Church, whose clergy exerted themselves to continue and increase Polish slavery for their own aggrandizement. Lelewel, sometimes called the "Jesuit of History," has done more by his profound and eloquent writings to undermine the power of Russia in Poland, to promulgate among his countrymen free principles, and awaken feelings of sympathy in behalf of his unfortunate country, than any other author.

The periodical literature of Poland, issued from the Slavic press in Paris for the last ten years, has been very prolific; and some of these productions are well conducted; among these "The Young Poland," "The Slavic Review," "The Polish Emigrants' Chronicle," and the "*Polish Vademecum*," edited by N. U. Hoffmann, rank among the first. The latter records the melancholy fact that, from 1831 to 1837, among the Polish emigrants in France, fourteen died by suicide, and nine in duels.

Polish Belles-lettres, from 1830 to 1850, remains to be noticed. It seems to be generally conceded that one of the most interesting productions of this period is Adam Mickiewicz's course of Lectures on Slavic Literature, and the Condition of the Slavic Nations, delivered at Paris in French, where he officiated as a professor in the Collége de France; and the same work has been published in German. This work possesses some very remarkable features, especially when we consider that it comes from a Polish exile. These lectures are full of profound thought and rich sentences, clothed in sound philosophy and poetical language; while a deep enthusiasm, and strong, mental excitement, pervade the whole course of lectures. He advocates *Panslavism*—or the union of the Slavic nations—lauds Napoleon, and predicts a new and

general revolution of Northern Europe. This gigantic poet has displayed his genius in several other poetical works; though, like all Slavic poets, his pen does not seem to be very prolific, as the paucity of his volumes shows. His beautiful tale, "Sir Thaddeus, or Pan Tadeusz," published at Paris in 1834, contains an interesting description of the civil and domestic life of Lithuania previous to the war of 1812, which may be regarded as a novel, though it appears in the form of verse. His other smaller poems abundantly sustain his reputation.

The "Evening Hours of a Pilgrim," by Witwicki, is a work of interest, both in style and matter, and contains much useful information concerning the literature of Poland, and the general condition of the country during the reign of Stanislas Poniatowski; and this author ranks perhaps next to Mickiewicz. The modern romantic school of Polish poets, of which Mickiewicz has the reputation of being the founder, contains several others of distinction. Julian Korsak and A. E. Odyniec have made some agreeable translations from the English; and both possess respectable gifts for original works. One of the most popular productions of the modern Polish literature is "*Maria*," a poetical tale, by Anton Malczeski, first published at Warsaw in 1825, and afterwards passed through several editions in different languages. This interesting book contains an affecting family legend, which tradition hands down from the noble family of Potocki in Volhynia, and is transposed by Malczeski to the Ukraine, and thus ingrafted into the history of this interesting country. This romantic and adventurous young author died in 1826, not quite thirty-four years old.

The Ukraine has long been the most prolific soil for the growth of Polish literature, so far as subjects are concerned. Over this

romantic country the poet's imagination kindles with the liveliest emotions. Here the historian finds the richest materials for his annals; and the warrior's bosom heaves with a heart filled with the recollections of his hard-fought battles with the Turks, the Tartars, the Cossacks, and the Russians. Over these scenes of Ukraine memory, the genius of the Polish poets, Zaleski, Grabowski, Goscsynski, and others, looms with enchanting glory—whose magical descriptions of the country are pictures in which the sweet and the rough, the wild and the romantic, the lyric and the heroic, are all tastefully and eloquently blended with a master's hand, which never fails to delight us. And although these Ukraine materials combine almost every contrast, mingled with both attractive and repulsive elements, where the Russian common people detest the Poles; yet, notwithstanding all these apparent anomalies, the Polish poet, Thomas Padura, clothed his sweet songs in the dialect of the Ruthenian peasantry. Michael Czaykowski, another eminent Polish poet, has also made the Ukraine the theatre of his interesting tales, as appears from his Legends of the Cossacks, his tales, Wernyhora, Kirdzali, the Hetman of the Ukraine, and several other eminent productions.

Among the Polish emigrants, the names of A. Gorecki, Ignatius Krasinski, J. Slawacki, and Garcsinski, appear as authors of notoriety. Count Ignatius Krasinski must not be confounded with the author of the History of the Reformation in Poland, in the English language, before-mentiond. Although many of the Poles consider him as their greatest living poet, yet most of his productions are too obscure for ordinary readers. His best productions are two dramatic poems, called "The Undivine Comedy," in opposition to Dante; and the other, "Irydion," a sort of commentary on Schiller's apothegm, "The History of the

World is the Judgment of the World." Among the popular novel-writers are Szabranski, F. Barnatowicz, Count Skarbek, J. Krascewski, K. Korwell, and others. The principal poets of the modern school are Burski, Szabranski, Alex. Groza, Nowasielski, Zialinski, A. Bielowski, and Lucian Siemienski. By the latter, in connection with Kamienski, Schiller has been well translated. Count Vinzent Kicinski translated Victor Hugo, and Holawinski has written a good translation of Shakspeare St. Jaczowski and Counts Fredro, Korzeniowski, and others, have reputation as dramatic writers. Wladislas Woicicki has written several eminent works, all of a decided national character, whose life has been devoted to the antiquities and language of his country. In 1838, he published a valuable collection of old Polish proverbs, several historical tales in the form of Annals, Domestic Sketches, and an interesting work on Polish women, all founded on historical facts and well-drawn pictures of Polish life and manners. The same author published a collection of traditions and popular legends, in 1839—a work of great merit.

The grammatical and lexical literature of Poland has obtained a respectable standing. The best grammars of the language are the following: In German, Mrongovius Poln, Sprachlehre, published at Konigsburg, 1794, and after passing through several improved editions under different titles, received its last edition at Dantsig, in 1836. Bantkie Poln Grammatik, which is attached to his Dictionary, published at Breslau, in 1808–1824, is considered a work of merit. Krumhols Polnische Grammatik issued at Breslau, in 1797, sixth edition. Aussug aus Kopczynski's Grammatik von Polsfuss, published at Breslau, in 1794; Szumski's Poln. Gramm., which was printed at Posen in 1830; Vater's Grammatik der Poln. Sprache, issued at Halle

in 1807; Samcniawa Wortforschungslehre der Polnischen Sprache, of Lemberg and Lemgo, 1842–43. Poplinski Polnische Grammatik, printed at Lissa, 1836, and a last edition of 1840. Schiewcok Grammatik der Polnischen, Sprache, published at Neustadt and Fraustadt, in 1847; and Stostakowskiego Polska Grammatik, issued at Trzemessne, in 1846. The principal grammars of the Polish language which have appeared in French are Trambczynski Grammatique Raisonnée de la Langue Polonaise, in a new edition of 1793, at Warsaw; and Koposynski Essai d'une Grammaire Polonaise, published at Warsaw in 1807.

The principal lexical works on the Polish language in German and French are Troc. Franzpoln, Deutsches Worterbuch, in several editions from 1742 to 1821; Mrongovius Handworterbuch der Loln. Sprache, last edition, Danz., 1823; J. V. Bantkie Taschenworterbuch der Poln. Sprache, which has passed through several editions in German and French, at Breslau and Warsaw from 1805 to 1819; Dict. Polonais-Française, published at Paris in 1844; Slownik Francusko-Polski, Dictionnaire Polonaise Française, printed at Berlin and Leipsig in 1839–45; Polnisch-Deutsches Taschenworterbuch von Jordan, Leipsig, 1845; J. A. E. Schmidt, Nouveau Dictionnaire Portatif Française et Polonaise, Zerbst, 1847; and also the etymological dictionaries of G. S. Bantkie and Linde.

Section X.

POLISH THEATRE.

One of the most important branches of Polish literature, and the one which has heretofore been the most ruinous to the civil and religious institutions of the country, is the theatre. The

intimate connection of the Polish and Russian theatres and more especially since the conquest of Poland, seems to require very naturally, the common discussion of both. The amusements of a people, their dramatic taste, their native love of song, the strength of its productive faculty, in the gradual development of this most popular sphere of art, as displayed in their theatres, their public sports, and popular amusements, reveal many of the phases of national character and civil society, which cannot always be recognised with the same clearness and accuracy from other parts of their history. It is here we may study the tendencies and dispositions of the masses, in their relations to dramatic art; and from the audiences of the theatres some very safe inferences may be drawn, as to the whole political and moral character of the nation. Poland was early distinguished for its low theatres, immoral sports, and degraded amusements. For more than a century past, there were in the kingdom beside the royal art institutions at Warsaw, at least four strong dramatic companies of genuine Polish caste, which habitually gave public performances in the most fashionable cities. Only two of them ever reached the distinction of playing before the national court. One of the distinguishing features of these companies was, they never performed foreign works; but confined themselves exclusively to the native productions of Poland and Russia.

The managers were either themselves poets, or had poets associated with them in business. Each was controlled by his poet, with as much devotion as Wallenstein by his astrologer. The company depended on its dramatic ability, while its performances were limited almost exclusively to the productions of its poet; although the better establishments were in the habit of exchanging with each other the plays of their dramatists. This

obstinate attachment to their native productions, to the exclusion of all foreign dramas, is chargeable, partly to the want of familiarity with foreign literature, partly to national feeling, and partly to the fact that the Polish taste was not assimilated to that of the Germans, Italians, French, or English. These circumstances gave rise to a creative faculty for poetry, which promised a successful national drama. And, even after all the wars, revolutions, unjust divisions and foreign invasions, which have destroyed the Poles and degraded their stage, this unfortunate people still possess a high order of talent in the poetic art. It is true, the Poles from their first national organization, have always strongly resembled and imitated the French in their poetry, literature, and national institutions; yet, notwithstanding all this borrowed light, there still exist a few companies of players, which, like their ancient predecessors, have their own poets, whose pieces they perform exclusively; or those of Polish origin that they have arranged and adapted. One of these companies, whose principal personage is called Richlawski, is now in Little Poland, performing in the cities of Radom, Kielce, Opatow, Sandomir, and others. Another company, which generally remains in the government of Kalisch, is under the direction of Felinski; by whose excellent dramatic compositions it has gained a reputation quite equal to that of the music band of the celebrated Strauss. Yet, it must be borne in mind, that these companies are only relics of their former greatness; though the Polish drama, in general, has reached a character and destiny which was not anticipated a hundred years since.

The origin of the Russian theatre is much more recent, and widely different from the Polish stage in many respects; although modern innovations have nominally united them. The Czar has

always controlled the Russian drama, and, since the conquest of Poland, has extended this dictation to the theatre of the fallen nation. Peter the Great was very sensitive in his interference with the theatrical sports of his subjects; but the empress Catharine emancipated dramatic literature, and took it under her immediate, courtly protection. Both Alexander and Nicholas were very liberal in their theatrical patronage; and during their reigns extensive and magnificent arrangements were made with the royal assent, in every one of the cities, where the emperor from time to time resides; until Russia boasts of five theatres, two of which excel everything in Europe in size and splendor; although they are destitute of correct taste in the dramatic art. The stage in the Muscovite empire, has very properly been compared to a rose-bush grafted on a wild thorn. It is not the natural growth of a national production. The poetic talent and literature of the people have not produced it; and the country is, therefore, destitute of any national dramatic basis to support it. The Russian theatre is, in every respect, a foreign institution; without national origin, and, of course, without the hearts of the people to nourish it. The masses have no dramatic taste, for the reason they have no dramatic poetry; and the obstinate barbarism of the Russian nature, has not yielded to the influence of science, sufficient to form any correct standard of dramatic poetry.

In the Russian empire the laws of human progression appear to be reversed. What in other nations is the final result of ages of experience, is there the beginning. There the rulers have always fearfully dreaded the natural development of the people, as too circuitous, and requiring too much time to produce the desired results. The ingenious Czars, therefore, have invented a

new patent for civilisation and literature, by which they seek to raise their subjects to the level of other races, by forcing them to imitate the civil institutions of their neighbors. Peter the Great says in his last will and testament: "Let there be no intermission in teaching the Russian people European forms and customs." The Russian theatre is one of these forms; and this explains its condition. A few independent companies of foreign players are still found in the country, but they are not Russian establishments. Odessa has two or three such foreign theatres, formed as a matter of speculation. The Italian company is said to be good; but the Russian establishment, which has now become somewhat permanent, and has hitherto been under German management, is very poor. The company in Kiew, consisting mostly of Poles collected from the old Polish provinces now incorporated with Russia, enjoys a high reputation. The Polish taste for the theatre is so powerful and extensively cultivated, that it would be no difficult matter, in every little town, village, or city, throughout the country, to assemble on short notice a tolerable company for dramatic performance; while in Russia it would be much easier to raise an army to cross the Balkan. Russia is most decidedly Cossack in taste, manners, and feelings, and fitted only for martial exploits, which in all probability will require many ages, at the present rate of progression, before it will yield to the refinements of European civilisation. There is a radical difference in the national character of Russia and Poland; and for this reason, among many others which will subsequently be urged, they should exist as separate and independent nations; and Poland should be restored to its former national dominion. The Poles, like the French, are remarkably sanguine, fiery, enthusiastic, full of profound thought and deep-toned feeling, with great

activity. The Russian, like his barbarous and savage ancestry, resembling very much the American Indian, is in all his powers, intellectual, moral, and physical, low and brutal—a lover of coarse, sensual pleasures—full of fight and animal strength, but not endowed with a capacity to receive impressions quickly, and elaborate them with mental clearness.

In these respects the masses and the aristocracy, the serfs and their masters, are all substantially alike. The Russian noble has very little refinement to boast of over his peasant; both are idle, sensual, and brutal, without activity except in fighting. But in Poland the case is widely different. Here we find the peasant, it is true, a rough, uncultivated creature; but the noble is almost always a man of comparative refinement—deficient, indeed, generally in scientific attainments, but always possesses the culture of a man of the world. The true, philosophical reason is, that his active, impetuous soul finds it necessary to maintain familiarity with the world around him, and keep up a good understanding with it. The cold-hearted Russian never feels the force of this logic.

In St. Petersburg the German theatre was for a long time much more successful than the native company, though the Russian population there was nearly twenty times larger than that of the Germans. The Russians who patronize the theatre are the richest and most prominent members of the aristocracy. They regard the drama as simply a thing of fashion, and therefore it is considered in good taste to be present at the beginning, and retire before the play ends. This courtly etiquette exerts a most unfavorable influence on the Russian and Polish theatres, for the reason among others, that it frequently happens, long before the performance is over, the house is entirely deserted, in conformity

to fashion, and to avoid the stigma of seeming deficient in noble manners. This practice of course leaves the audience in ignorance of the chief merits of the piece, which is generally reserved for the closing scene; and removes the restraints and incentives of the actors, so necessary to the successful termination of the play. Hence, the principal attraction of the northern theatres is not the play, but some splendid show. The principal object which attracts the attention of a Russian lady, is the trailing-robe of a distinguished actress, or some other novelty in dress; while she fails to appreciate the merits of the piece, or the accomplishment of the actors. This perverted taste has given rise to the strange fact, that, at St. Petersburg as well as Moscow, the ballet is held in much higher estimation than the best dramas; and the gaudy poetry of motion entirely eclipses the sublimest poetry of thought. Where such taste and principles prevail—where gipsy-dances, rope-dances, athletes, circus-riders, and men-apes are the principal stars of popular amusements, we must reasonably expect to find a state of society very little in advance of the semi-barbarous.

Such was the state of the theatrical literature in Warsaw a few years since, when the circus company of Tourniare was there. The theatres brought out their best and most popular pieces in order to secure patronage, and guard against pecuniary losses. The patriotic Poles, whose literary refinement has always excelled that of the Russians, gave their preference to the drama; but the gross Russians were the liberal patrons and fulsome adorers of Madame Tourniare and her horse. Indeed, the novel and bizarre feats of this charming lady, quite turned the brains and perverted the hearts of princes and generals, who neglected both the affairs of the state and the concerns of the army, to be present at the

circus, during eleven months, without losing a single performance. But the Polish Count Ledochowski, to his praise be it recorded, attended but once with his family, without seeing anything of the performances himself, because he read Schiller's William Tell every moment. Although this contrast in dramatic taste exhibits Polish opposition to Russian favoritism, yet it also reveals the national peculiarities of the two races.

This lamentable deficiency in good taste, and depraved appetite for low amusements, account for the fact that the dramatic art, and the talent for acting, are rarely found among the Russians. After all the great and continued efforts of the late Czars to increase the splendor of their capitals, and the interest of their courts, by means of the theatre, they have not succeeded in forming from their sixty millions of inhabitants native artists above mediocrity, except in very low comedy. The Russian emperors at last determined to establish dramatic schools in connection with the theatre, for the education of players. But experience soon taught the Russian autocrat that talent is a plant of slow and tender growth, and cannot be created by royal mandates. To remedy this evil, and hasten the tardy march of human development, the Emperor Nicholas was so vexed at the incapacity of the Russians for dramatic art, that he resolved to procure children from Germany for his theatrical schools. But his royal purpose met with such obstinate resistance from the Russian aristocracy, that the monarch and his queen contented themselves with taking children of the German race from his own dominions, without any sacrifice of Russian pride. Two things are necessary for the success of the dramatic art: first, poetry, which naturally precedes the drama; and next, a pure and talented theatre. And after fifty years' experience, in which the Russian govern-

ment has lavished its patronage for theatrical improvement, and the introduction of a better taste for the arts and sciences among the Muscovites, no visible effect is discernible. Had the same money been expended, and the same effort made in establishing common schools for the education of the masses, the consequences would have been widely different, and Russian and Polish civilization would be far in advance of their present condition. The number of pupils who have made any considerable progress in the theatrical schools is very small, and seldom has a dramatic star arisen from them. Composing and acting are of course two distinct professions; and the man who attempts both, seldom succeeds in either. But the Russian schools, heedless of this law of nature, aim at success by uniting both professions in the same person, and of course their experiments have been failures.

The difficulties of form always appear insurmountable to Russian enterprise; and hence they devote themselves generally to romance and novels, where the form is less embarrassing. It has happened in Russia, as it generally does in the beginning of every nation's literature, that every writer of any distinction is considered as a miracle, and regarded with stupor, as in the case of the dramatist Kukolnik. He has written much for the theatre; but his chief excellence is in imitation. But all his works, including his favorite sphere of romance, betray the national weakness, which lies in a want of organisation—where the work was begun and completed without any previous plan or plot of the author, or its mode of treatment. Kukolnik's "Alf and Adona" may be taken as a specimen of the author's chaotic style, in which he introduced at least one hundred and fifty different characters, without one prominent hero, whose appearance is designed to concentrate the interest and admiration of the audience. Each

of these one hundred and fifty personages comes on to the stage to show himself in his turn, and retires to make room for his successor. Everything is described and explained with equal minuteness, from a mouse-trap to a steamboat—from shooting a woodcock to the murder of a prince; and the whole is without historical action, and full of disconnected and unimportant details. The same unpardonable defect is found in his "Eveline and Baillerole;" and prevails in all his works. The same criticism is applicable to the works of Iwan Wanenko, Boriczewski, Zchewen, Wolkow, Czerujawski, Ulitinins, and, in fact, to all the Russian authors.

But all the efforts of the Czars to elevate the native theatre of Russia, and crush the Polish drama, have failed. The Imperial family have done everything in their power for the Russian stage. The artists enjoy the most liberal patronage of the government; schools are established in order to raise them from the degradation of gross buffoonery to that of true art; genius is rewarded with the most magnificent premiums; distinguished actors are made equal in rank to officers of state; and after only twenty-five years' service, reckoning from their debut, they are permitted to retire the remainder of life, with a pension equal to their full salaries. The government gives high rewards to Russian star-actors, for the purpose of drawing out the best talent from every section of the country. The Russian actors are compelled by law, on pain of punishment, to attend regularly the German theatre for the purpose of improvement; where they enjoy the performances of the best German actors, who are drawn to St. Petersburg by lucrative compensations. And after all this useless exertion on the part of government, the Russian theatre is not elevated above the dignity of a workshop. In low comedy,

perhaps, the Russian stage may be considered equal to the Germans in the same department; but in the higher walks of the drama the Russian actors are worthless. The people have neither the taste nor learning for the enjoyment of serious works —their poets are destitute of the ability to write them—the actors have not the talent to represent them—nor the auditors the capacity to enjoy them.

Immediately after the final conquest of Poland in 1831, the theatres, both local and itinerant, were closed by Russian tyranny, with the intention of not allowing them to be re-opened until they could be occupied by Russian performers. But experience soon taught the Czar that the genius of man could not be created or annihilated by Imperial flats. Polish theatres could not be sustained by Russian patronage, nor could they be supplied with Russian performers. The experiment was tried in Warsaw, under the advocacy of a Russian newspaper established for that purpose; but the patriotic Poles would not go to it. The power of the Muscovites, which had been everywhere invincible in building vast fortresses, and in destroying those still more vast, in crossing the Balkan and conquering armies, now found itself perfectly despicable and powerless in the simple enterprise of sustaining a Russian theatre within the century-worn walls of liberty-loving Warsaw. At last, the Imperial government, recovering from its rage and folly, and finding that literature has its laws, which circumscribe Russian tyranny within the same, "hitherto shalt thou come and no farther," that bounds the ambition of other barbarous nations, was compelled to re-open the Polish theatre The small theatre on the Krasinski place, which was the only one in Warsaw, except the circus and the little theatre of King Stanislas Augustus, was closed; and the

sum of four millions of florins, or one million six hundred thousand dollars, was appropriated for the erection of two large and magnificent theatres. The supervision of erecting the buildings, and the management of the performances, according to the Russian policy, were entrusted to one General Rautenstrauch, a man seventy years old, and worn out both in body and mind. Both theatres were erected under one roof, and arranged on the most grand and splendid scale. This magnificent edifice, which is opposite the City Hall, occupies the whole side of the main public place, and is above seven hundred and fifty feet in length. The spacious pit in each is supported by a series of immense, stupid, square pilasters, consisting of such rude architecture as is seldom found out of Russia. Over these pilasters stands the first row of boxes, supported by beautifully wrought Corinthian columns, while above these rise three additional rows. The edifice is about one hundred and sixty feet high, and is the most colossal building in Warsaw. It was originally designed to treat the actors in military fashion, according to Russian style, and therefore the building was laid out like barracks, in which almost seven hundred persons reside, most of whom are employed about the theatre. The two stages were built by a German architect, under the inspection of the superannuated old general, whose ignorant and peremptory suggestions, which were frequent and injurious, greatly deranged the beauty and utility of the original design of the architect. The great theatre, as it is called, which has four rows of boxes, and can seat commodiously six thousand auditors, and also the Variétés theatre, which is much smaller, are fitted up with all sorts of apparatus that ever belonged to a stage. As is frequently the case in the bizarre taste of the Russians, when they try to display their native talent, new machinery

was in many cases invented for these stages, much of which proved useless.

On one side has been erected a very large and strong bridge, leading from the street to the stage, where large bodies of cavalry enter the theatre, when the play requires their presence; and machines are constructed for conveying persons instantly down from the sky above the stage, a distance of fifty-six feet. One of these extensive and complicated machines for which a ballet has been composed, serves to transport eighty persons together, on a seeming cloud, from the roof to the footlights, far excelling the machines of the grand opera at Paris; and cost sixteen thousand dollars.

Under the management of two Russian generals, who have for a long time been at the head of the Russian theatre, great advances have been made in external show, without any real improvement. The great Russian theatre of St. Petersburg has served as a model for all the subordinate establishments, and, consequently, nothing has been really improved excepting the ballet, which is the least related to genuine art. It is a remarkable fact, that, excepting Paris, the great theatre at Warsaw gives the most splendid ballet in the world. As the Poles excel the Russians in physical beauty and grace, the ballet performers of the latter are far inferior to the former; and heretofore the corps of the St. Petersburg ballet has twice been composed of Poles; but the arrangement was abandoned as derogatory to the national pride of the Russians, who excel in fighting and imitation, but never in originating. The principal charms of the theatre, and by far the most powerful, sensual, and corrupting attractions of the stage, particularly in Poland, Russia, and France, are connected with the ballet. Hence the Czars have

established a large school, liberally endowed, for the purpose of educating dancers, which is filled with pupils from three to eighteen years old. The school contains about two hundred pupils, selected from the most talented and beautiful children of the country, who occasionally appear together on the boards in the ballet of Charis and Flora, when they receive a trifling compensation for their juvenile performances. What a distressing and sickening spectacle of human degradation, to see these little creatures, hardly weaned from their mothers' breasts, twisted and tortured for the purpose of one of the most despicable professions, equally ruinous to health and morals!

Russian tyranny, Russian moroseness and immorality—the leading characteristics of the people—are stamped on all their amusements, literature, and institutions throughout the Muscovite dominions; and hence, their great partiality for the ballet, to the neglect of the more modest and chaste drama. This depravity of taste operates to the prejudice of those artists who resort to the imperial theatre from the provinces for employment, who are frequently respectable in professional talent, and equally successful in comedy and tragedy. Comedy has been less shackled than tragedy; for the reason that it is more congenial to the vulgar taste of northern society. The Polish poets are so hampered with imperial tyranny through the political censorship, that their pieces are seldom allowed to be performed, until all the sentences, words, and phrases, which relate to patriotism and freedom, are stricken out; embracing hundreds of words and phrases, such as freedom, liberty, avenging sword, slavery, oppression, father-land, etc. Accordingly all poetic talent is driven from the stage, where nothing but the trumpery of mere penny-a-liners is brought forward before the public. It is a sur-

prising fact in the history of literature, and one which monarchy and aristocracy have found much difficulty in solving, even to their own satisfaction, that true poetry the world over, is the language of human freedom. Neither nature nor nature's God ever formed a tyrant-hearted poet. These ephemeral productions continue on the stage during the engagement of the artist; which, together with the habit of the public to expect nothing interesting, and the imperial regulation, which forbids any mark of disapprobation under pain of imprisonment, stultify and compel the managers to use translations of the French plays, which are generally unfortunate selections from inferior authors. For the purpose of catering for Russian taste, only those pieces founded on civic life are chosen; while historical and the more elevated subjects are excluded.

The royal edict forbids princely personages to be introduced on the stage, and even high officers of state, such as ministers and generals. So jealous are tyrants of being personified on the stage, that, in former times, the emperor of China was once allowed to pass; but more recently the Bey of Tunis was struck out, and converted into an African nobleman. Tragedy is never admissible in any case; and, even if the composition should be unobjectionable in every respect, except the name, still that must be changed to drama, or the whole piece is rejected. In such circumstances, it would naturally be expected, that the actors would soon lose all interest and taste for their profession. But it is far otherwise. The cultivated portion of the public at Warsaw, never go to the theatre with the expectation of seeing a poetic work of art, but only to enjoy the skill of the performers; and, of course, there is no such thing as theatrical criticism at Warsaw, nor anywhere in the Russian empire. The best criti-

cism on the present state of the drama, is the universal regret for the miserable little theatre on the Krasinski place, where Sucskowska, subsequently Mad. Halpert, founded her reputation, in the character of the Maid of Orleans. But, notwithstanding all these embarrassments, which would ruin any theatre in any other European kingdom save Russia, the Warsaw theatre is filled with princes and princesses, and adorned with all the female beauty of the country.

The Warsaw theatres are conducted like those of Russia, and in conformity to the great model at St. Petersburg; and hence, almost without exception, the pupils of the dramatic school, of whom seventeen have come upon the boards, have turned out to be mere journeymen, and have been superseded by inferior performers from the provincial cities, in obedience to imperial dictation. The eminent Polish artists of late years have not enjoyed the advantages of the national school. The government patronage of the actors at Warsaw is the same as at St. Peterburg. The day after their first appearance, they enter upon their public duties as imperial officers; take an oath never to meddle with political affairs, nor join any secret society, nor ever to pronounce on the stage anything except what is in the stamped parts given them by the imperial management.

The salaries of actors at Warsaw are small in comparison with those of other countries. Forty or fifty silver rubles a month—amounting from twenty-six to thirty-three dollars, is considered a very liberal compensation; and even the best star actors seldom receive over six hundred and fifty dollars a year. This was the annual salary of the distinguished Madame Halpert for a long time; until by the suggestion of Taglioni to Prince Paskiewich, her salary was raised one-half; and subsequently, by means of a

similar mediation, she succeeded in getting an addition of a thousand rubles yearly as wardrobe expenses. This small salary, after all its limited additions, was considered such an extraordinary innovation, that the managing general declared that so enormous a compensation would never be heard of again in any imperial theatre. The pupils of the dramatic school receive eighteen rubles monthly; and, according to their successful performances, receive permission every two years to ask an increase of salary. Their period of service extends to twenty-five years, with the certainty of a yearly pension equal to the salary received at the close of the period. This provision is considered by the artist as an ample compensation for all the sacrifices he has to make.

There is no prospect of improving the Polish drama so long as Russian tyranny prevails. The comedies of Count Fredro, with all their artful and fine satire, with a view to dramatic culture, can never redeem the stage, so long as the vulgar tramp of Russian cavalry is heard there. No native Russian drama can be established so long as it remains a vast empire without beauty; mighty in battle, but weak in learning and destitute of artistic talents; powerful in destruction, but incapable of creating and originating.

The Polish poets were more successful in every department of poetry than in the drama. Educated in the French school and ever imitating French poetry, they of course could not succeed in dramatic poetry. It was ever considered a desideratum in Polish literature to establish a national stage, not merely for the purpose of amusement, but as a disciplinary school for purifying and improving the vernacular language and literary taste of the nation, as well as a moral school for ridiculing vice. Influenced by these notions, several distinguished clergymen both wrote for

and patronized the theatre. The first original comedies, were written by the Jesuit Bokomolec in 1757; and several other comedies, containing truthful pictures of the times, were written by bishop Kossakowski. The pen of Prince Czartoryski, as before stated, contributed to the drama. Lipinski, Zablocki, Osinski, Kowalski, and others, both imitated and translated the French masterpieces for the Polish stage; and original pieces were composed by the actors Boguslawski, Bielawski, and Zolkowski. Several tragedies, confined mostly to Polish history, were written by Niemcewicz, Slowacki, Felinski, Dembrowski, Kropinski, and Hofmann. The best Polish tragedy is the Glinski of F. Wenzyk. Count Fredro, known as the Polish Molière, has the reputation of writing the most popular comedies of modern times. The Polish stage has ever been more celebrated in its melo-dramas, portraying rural pictures in dramatic style; among which the "John Kochanowski," written by Niemcewicz, is one of the best specimens.

The universal and injurious influence of the Polish theatre, in forming the indolent, passionate, and rude habits of the people, is very apparent. The public amusements of a community, always exercise a controlling influence in forming their character. And in all nations, ancient and modern, where the people are passionately fond of theatrical plays, performed by both sexes, in which human nature is portrayed in all its sensual phases, theatrical literature gains the ascendency, to the great detriment of the useful arts and sciences. That man is formed for society and social amusement, no reasonable philosopher or Christian can doubt. But these amusements must be innocent, rational, chaste, instructive, and useful. Music, poetry, sculpture, oratory, and literary entertainments, when properly conducted, are well adapted to human culture and enjoyment. The true province of amuse-

ments is, to improve the intellectual, moral, and physical powers of man. Whether the stage can be so improved as to promote these laudable ends is not the question; the true point at issue between the friends and foes of the theatre, is this—is the theatre as it is at present conducted, and as it ever has been managed, beneficial or injurious to the civil, moral, and religious interests of the people? In answer to this, the history of the ancient Grecian and Roman theatres, together with the theatres of modern Europe and America, records the fact without a single exception, that the influence of the theatre is immoral and injurious, both to the performers and the auditors. Nor should the additional fact be overlooked, that in proportion as the civilization, literature, morals, and religion of society advance, in the same ratio the patronage and influence of the theatre diminish. It is a well-known fact, that the stage, both in England and America, where civil society has reached its greatest improvement known in the history of the world, has been rapidly declining for the last twenty-five years; while the rational amusements of music, oratory, poetry, statuary, and particularly the eloquent readings of Fanny Kemble, and the enchanting concerts of Jenny Lind, bid fair to supersede the grosser amusements of the theatre.*

Section XI.

POLISH MUSIC.

A distinguished philosopher and statesman has well said—

* Anthon's Classical Dictionary, Art. Theatre. American Encyclopædia, XII., 211, 461. Encyclopædia Britannica, Art. Theatre. Dunlap's History of the American Theatre.

"Let me write the songs of a nation, and I care not who writes their laws." The poet of Avon, whose knowledge of human nature probably has never been excelled by any man, has correctly sung the same principle in the following poetry of nature:

> "The man that hath no music in himself,
> Nor is not mov'd with concord of sweet sounds,
> Is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils;
> The motions of his spirit are dull as night,
> And his affections dark as Erebus."

Music appears to be an elementary principle of the moral constitution of man, and prevails among all nations, races, and tribes of the human family, from the earliest history of their existence anterior to the general deluge. Music was early cultivated in the family of Adam; and whenever and wherever history can trace his descendants, it finds them singing and playing on various musical instruments. It is a source of amusement on festival occasions, an incentive to heroism in the battle-field, and the aid of devotion in the sanctuary. Music is both an art and a science. As a fine art, its principal object is to give pleasure by the proper succession and combination of agreeable sounds, produced by the human voice, or by musical instruments. Modern music, as a science, consists of two principal branches—melody, or the grammatical and agreeable succession of single sounds, as a solo; and harmony, or the proper combination of simultaneous sounds; and the union of melody and harmony forms music. Melody may perhaps exist independently of harmony; but harmony cannot well subsist without the melodious arrangement of each of the several parts of which it is composed. The music of a people is of two kinds, popular and classical. The popular music of a

nation embraces their primeval songs and melodies, which are taught by tradition before they are reduced to writing. Classical music includes the more modern compositions of the art, reduced to scientific forms, and form the printed volumes of the science. Music, when divided into its various subjects, comprehends domestic music, festival music, martial music, national music, religious music, and miscellaneous music, both instrumental and vocal.

That music holds a controlling influence over man, is an elementary principle in all governments, and recognised by all nations, and all classes of society. There is *destiny* in the music of a people for weal or woe. This principle is equally applicable to ancient and modern nations, and extends to all classes of citizens in all the relations of life. Its influence begins with the earliest associations of the nursery, and, continuing through life, has an important agency in the formation of character, and the personal and social improvement of the race. The influence of music is felt generally throughout the animal creation. The ferocious tiger, the poisonous serpent, and the brutal savage, yield to its power. But man, the immortal part of the animal creation, is formed by his Creator to feel the charms of music most sensibly. It reigns over his physical, intellectual, and moral powers —enters into his reflections, his emotions, and his volitions— diffuses itself through his actions, inspires his hopes, quiets his fears, lights up his smiles of joy, mingles with his tears of woe, composes him in infancy, cheers him in youth, animates middle age, nerves his arm in battle, gives vitality to his love, aids his scientific pursuits, relieves the tedium of life, enlivens his politics, cheers his festivities, adorns the social and domestic circles, con-

soles him in death, and continues with his immortality in the life to come.

The influence of music over the physical powers of man, was considered by the ancients as miraculous; and still remains a mystery, even to the sagacity of modern philosophy. Our first experience with the charms of music is in the nursery, during the period of helpless infancy. Here its soothing influence makes its appeals, so far as we know, exclusively to the physical powers; while the intellectual and moral faculties are not sufficiently developed to appreciate its charms. It is foreign from our present purpose to inquire into the philosophy of music, in the effects on the animal economy generally; but we shall confine the investigation to the human family. We all know, that the power of a mother's artless song over her restless infant, in soothing its pains, cultivating its repose, and restoring its equanimity, is far more successful than all medical and other means combined. One of the first acts of intelligence, which the anxious parent discovers in his babe, is its recognition of the thrilling accents of the fond mother. Her melodious voice is well known long before the father's is noticed. We are indebted to the music of the nursery for several of our sweetest melodies; which were first composed by mothers while rocking their infants. And history gives numerous instances of the influence of nursery music, in forming the character of musicians, heroes, statesmen, philosophers, and divines.

The character of man is complicated. He enjoys a world within and a world without. His reflections, emotions, volitions, and various faculties, intellectual, moral, and physical, are so mysteriously and harmoniously combined, that whatever cause influences the one, affects the whole, for good or ill; all of which

must be gratified or disappointed in some way. One of the most difficult questions of life is the selection of our amusements. Have them we will, right or wrong, good or evil; and if we fail in the selection of innocent and useful recreations, we are sure to indulge in vice. To meet these demands of our nature, and gratify our thirst for amusements, the Creator seems to have designed music as among the most effectual means of human happiness. Our passion for music is not only discovered in the early days of infancy, by the pleasure we derive from maternal song; but the same power soon prompts us to grasp for the music of the rattle-box, the whistle, and other musical toys. In more advanced childhood, we begin to amuse ourselves with martial music, the waltz, and the dance. In early youth we begin to feel the more powerful and complicated strains of the orchestra, and listen with delight to the soft and melting strains of the harp, guitar, and piano; and soon the streaming harmony of the deep-toned organ, the solemn devotions of church music, and the oratorio, the most important branch of the art, charm us with its rich modulations and expressive chords.

Music, as an amusement, has a decided advantage over all other means of recreation; for the reason that when confined to its true, lawful sphere, all its associations are innocent, virtuous, moral, and religious. True, music, in the hands of some of its degraded votaries, has been perverted to vicious purposes, and so have all the powers of man and all the blessings of life; therefore these perversions are merely exceptions, and weigh nothing in the scale of argument against the moral influence of the art. Music, in its purity, never leads its votaries from the paths of virtue; but is continually inviting them to happiness and perfection. Its benign influence extends to all the domestic relations.

What amusement can be more innocent and useful than the cultivation of music in the domestic circle? What can render more sacred and lasting the endearing relations of husband and wife, parent and child, brother and sister, master and servant, friends and relations? What comparison can be made in the scale of amusements, or in point of moral worth, between spending occasionally an hour or two in cultivating one of the most useful and interesting of all the arts; or wasting the same time at a game of hazard, or perhaps in idleness.

But the philosophy of music is not limited to the transitory amusements of man; it deals in matters of graver moment; it strikes at the very vitals of his existence, and exerts an important influence over his physical constitution and health. The laws of health, by the aid of medical science, are now so well ascertained, and so definitely settled, that few persons can be found so ignorant of the first principles of their existence, as wantonly to disregard them. That our happiness is dependent upon our health, is a proposition which commands the attention and respect of all who consult their true interest. It is now a well-settled principle, that the practice of music has an important bearing on the laws of health. It is difficult to explain how this effect is produced; but the fact admits of no doubt. In some cases of weak lungs, in the incipient stages of the disease, singing and blowing wind instruments have the effect of inflating and exercising the organs of the chest more perfectly than any other means; and thus a more healthy action and circulation are produced. It is upon this principle that the breathing-pipe has been invented by a distinguished surgeon, which, in many cases, is found useful to weak lungs. Playing the violin, the pianoforte, and organ, call into action the muscles in the region of

the chest, and produce a healthy tone of the vital organs. In certain nervous diseases, music has been resorted to with great success. This principle was well understood by the ancients in eastern climates, where this class of diseases is more frequent. The Jewish historian relates a remarkable case of the influence of music in curing King Saul, by the musical performances of David. The evil spirit which affected the royal patient, by some modern writers, is supposed to have been the same nervous disease which now prevails in many parts of Asia and Africa; and distinguished travellers in Asia, in modern times, have witnessed similar effects of music on the same class of patients. In Germany the beneficial effects of music over the physical system, in a large class of diseases, form an elementary principle of medical practice. The late celebrated Doctor Rush, of Philadelphia, not unfrequently availed himself of the same principle, in his extensive and successful medical practice. In cases of insanity, music has frequently proved to be a successful remedy.

All feel the exhilarating power of martial music. Hearts may be found so hard and frosty, as not to be moved by the pathos of song, or the more sublime strains of the Church; but when the notes of war are heard, every soul is thrilled with sensibility, and every one springs into action. Such is the importance and force of martial music, and so powerful is it in the tented field, that nations educate their soldiers to its strains at public expense, and surround the globe, every rising and setting sun, with the music of the shrilly fife and rolling drum, in the daily evening tatoo and morning reveille. The heroes of antiquity, and particularly the Poles, made their fiercest and most successful charges while their armies were singing and playing national airs. The war-whoop of the savage is always a musical signal for a fierce

onset. Sobieski, the renowned Polish general, won his most famous battles while he and all his hosts were chanting their *Te Deums*, and roaring their war-songs in the ears of their astonished enemies. And so sensible was Napoleon of the power of music in the field, that he frequently required his whole army to sing simultaneously their favorite national airs. Deprive an army of its music, and you cripple its energies at once.

A well-balanced equanimity is one of the most desirable attainments. Music is admirably calculated to compose the angry passions, and promote good feeling. It alleviates sorrow, animates hope, warms and softens the heart of the misanthrope. There is no room for the baser passions in the bosom where music reigns. It is always associated with peace and harmony, love and good will to man. And even in the more unconscious days of infancy, music has a peculiar influence in quieting the passions, and cultivating physical equanimity.

Man is designed by his Creator for social life. It is an elementary principle of his nature. He cannot exist without it. The hermit, the misanthrope, the miser, and the infidel, have all launched their poisonous arrows at the social principle for centuries, and yet it has withstood all their broadsides, and still continues to prosper. We learn from history, that wherever music prevails in its greatest purity, the social relations flourish with the greatest vigor. In Germany, music, for more than a century, has been taught at the expense of government, and is a branch of education in all their literary institutions, from the primary common-schools, up to their colleges and universities. They have furnished the world with the greatest masters of music, and the best compositions, until Germany is justly styled the "land of harmony." They are celebrated for their educa-

tion; and no people upon earth enjoy a greater amount of domestic happiness, or possess a purer love of country. Music is equally appreciated in England and the American Union; and wherever civilization, learning, morals, and religion prevail, there the beneficial effects of music are seen, felt, and taught, as an indispensable branch of education. And all history agrees that the cultivation of music and domestic happiness go hand in hand.

The influence of music is not confined to the physical powers of man, but exercises a control over his intellectual faculties. Its philosophy, in the exact sciences, challenges the most exalted genius. Some superficial observers of the art consider it as destitute of science, and treat it as a mere matter of fancy, fit only for the nursery, the ignorant, and the idle. This is a sad mistake. Music holds a prominent rank in the sciences, and involves some of the most abstruse principles of mathematics. In the proportions of the musical scale, in musical chords, and the structure of musical instruments, the most profound mathematician finds ample scope for his philosophy, his proportions, his arithmetic, his logarithms, and all the profound principles of his art. To demonstrate the number of vibrations in given columns of air in wind instruments, or the vibrations of stringed instruments to produce a given musical chord, furnish the most difficult mathematical problems.

Music stands at the head of the fine arts. In its effective appeals to human nature, it far excels sculpture, painting, dancing, poetry, history, or oratory. The fine arts have lavished their charms in attempting to portray the primeval state of man; but the prize has been most cheerfully awarded to music. Milton, in his immortal poem of Paradise Lost, has described Adam and

Eve in their innocence, as they came from the hands of their Maker, and their expulsion from Eden, in language that never has, and probably never can be excelled in poetical elocution. When we open this immortal poem, we read, we sigh, we smile, we tremble, we wonder at the poetical powers of the author, and the sublimity of his verse. And when we come to the parting scene between Eve and Paradise, where she takes her last and eternal farewell of the flowers and enchanting scenery of Eden, who does not feel the thrilling sublimity of the poetic art, when she exclaims, in tears and the anguish of her heart—

"O unexpected stroke, worse than of Death!
Must I thus leave thee, Paradise? Thus leave
Thee, native soil, these happy walks and shades.
* * * * O flowers!
That never will in other climate grow!
* * * * * *
Who now shall rear ye to the sun?
* * * * from thee
How shall I part?"

The sublime theme of this poetry, describing the happy state of our first parents, and their subsequent expulsion from Paradise, has been the favorite subject of the most distinguished artists in sculpture, painting, poetry, history, oratory, and music. But the beauties of the chisel and pencil are tame when compared with the sublime and thrilling strains of the lyre. If we would feel the full force of this heavenly song, take the music as arranged by the best masters, and then add the enchanting tones of Malibran, or her superior, Jenny Lind, and we soon lose sight of the cold, dead beauties of the marble and canvas, and find ourselves entranced by the almost miraculous charms of music. Those who have heard Malibran or Lind convulse an intelligent

and highly-educated audience of ten thousand with tears, sighs, and thrilling emotions, can readily appreciate the comparison. No such effects have ever been produced in any other department of the fine arts. It is the peculiar province of sculpture to delineate character; it cannot express emotion or action. It is the duty of the painter to bring out on his canvas both emotion and character, but he cannot reach action. Poetry, history, and oratory, are designed to combine character, passions, and action; but it is reserved for music to express all these, extending to every emotion and passion of which human nature is susceptible.

In tracing the influence of music over the human family, we must not omit to notice its beneficial effects in the cultivation of elocution. All men are delighted with eloquence. The verdict of all nations and all classes of citizens, ancient and modern, on this question, is the same. But we forget how much elocution is indebted to music. The orator must have a musical voice, musical tones, and musical language; varied and modulated to every thought, feeling, and action. His tones must be adapted to every note in the musical scale, within the compass of the human voice. Demosthenes, for the purpose of improving the lower tones of his voice, rehearsed his orations by the side of roaring waters; and to improve the higher tones, used pebbles under his tongue. Cicero cultivated his voice to every note in the musical scale, under the instruction of his master; and arranged every word of his orations to its appropriate note in the musical scale, similar to our modern opera, in tones less prolonged, corresponding to the speaking voice, similar to the *recitative* in modern music. The ancient schools of oratory accompanied the voice with musical instruments during a whole oration; and this was an elementary principle of instruction in the schools of Greece and

Rome. Many modern schools pursue a similar plan. All our elementary books on elocution, containing rules for the inflection of the voice, are constructed on similar principles. No man can properly be called an orator at the present day who is ignorant of music, and destitute of musical modulations of voice; and the combined charms of oratory and music have given rise to the opera. Hence we see the importance of making music a branch of education in common schools, as well as in every institution of learning, from the highest to the lowest.

Nor is the philosophy of music limited to the physical and intellectual powers of man; but it also extends its influence over his moral powers. Disguise it as we will, the great and ultimate end of man's existence is his moral and religious interests. Of this truth no one in his sober reflections entertains a doubt. And whatever tends to the cultivation of his moral principles and religious feelings, should be hailed by every philosopher, statesman, Christian, and citizen with delight. Our *true* interest, and our moral and religious interests, are in unison. We learn from history that in all ages music has been associated with religion; and modern philosophy regards music as a branch of moral science, indispensable in human culture. Man is so organized that his moral principles are reached most successfully through the medium of his passions; and to the passions music makes its most successful appeals. Moral principles may be successfully inculcated by the appeals of eloquence, by the beauties of poetry, sculpture, and painting; but it remains for the charms of sacred music, next to the Gospel, to produce the most salutary convictions. The Church has always felt the force of this philosophy, and therefore her choicest sentiments have been promulgated in the sanctuary through the medium of poetry and song. Nothing is

hazarded in the assertion, that the poetry of the Bible, which contains a complete system of moral science, was originally designed by Divine inspiration for the music of the Church. Here we find the best specimens of lyric poetry. The royal Psalmist was familiar with this philosophy, and therefore he taught his subjects both civil and religious laws through the medium of poetry and music.

Few persons can resist the force of moral principles when they are brought home by the appeals of music. The formation of moral principles is the foundation of moral actions. The latter cannot exist without the former. Form the one, and the other follows as a necessary consequence. No philosophy is better settled than the inseparable connection between principle and conduct. Hypocrisy may answer in some instances a temporary purpose; but moral action, without a well-settled corresponding moral principle, is of short duration. If we would improve the moral conduct of a community we must bring them where they can learn sound moral principles; and it has been found by long and repeated experiments, that the cultivation of music is the most successful means of producing this result. Every one soon becomes familiar with the moral principles of the poetry he sings, which makes a permanent impression on the mind, and soon his conduct is found to harmonise with the principles thus taught by the divine art. Natural and moral philosophy both agree in the doctrine, that an ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure. And if we would preserve the morals of youth, they must be brought habitually in contact with moral principles, where the charms of music and the devotions of religion may unitedly exert their salutary influence. And hence we find that the music of a people is always a true exponent of their civil, political, and religious

condition. We trace this principle very clearly in the music of the Hebrews, the Troubadours of the south of Europe, and the minstrels of the north, as well as among the American Indians, and the benighted islanders of Oceanica. And in all ages the religion of the Church, and the healthy morals of community, wax or wane with the purity of the music which controls their actions and mingles with their devotions.

With these general views of the philosophy of music as a standard, we may now safely advance to the consideration of Polish music. The popular music of Poland, found in their songs and familiar airs, existed long before the art of writing was known among them; and probably is as ancient as their earliest ancestors, anterior to the Christian era. Their classical music is of a much more modern date, and, with a few exceptions, dates with the last of the fifteenth century. The most ancient specimen of their music now extant, as before mentioned, is an ancient war-song, composed by St. Adalbert, as early as the tenth century. As far back in the annals of antiquity as history, tradition, and mythology can trace the Slavic nations, they are celebrated for their singing. Procopius, in his history of the Gothic Wars, says the Slavic camp, on the eve of an important battle, was surprised by the Greek forces while the former had imprudently sung themselves to sleep by the chorus of their own music. During the war between the Greeks and the Avars, in 590, the former took three Slavi as prisoners, who were sent from the Baltic as ambassadors to Khan, the ruler of the Avars. These musical warriors, instead of weapons, carried with them musical instruments resembling the guitar; for the reason, as they stated, that, having no iron in their country, they were ignorant of the use of swords and spears, and therefore music, by

singing and playing on their guitars, was their principal occupation. Schaffarik, in describing the universal prevalence of the musical taste of the Slavic nations, says: "Where a Slavic woman is, there is also song. House and yard, mountain and valley, meadow and forest, garden and vineyard, are all filled with the sounds of her voice. Often, after a wearisome day spent in heat and sweat, hunger and thirst, she animates on her way home the silence of the evening twilight with her melodious songs." What spirit these popular songs breathe, the reader may learn from the collections already published. Without encountering contradiction, we may say that among no other nation of Europe does natural poetry exist to such an extent, and in such purity, heartiness, and warmth of feeling, as among the Slavi.

To those who have listened to the music of the Slavic peasantry, and particularly the Polish emigrants in America, this picture will not appear too high colored. Of all the Slavic nations, the Poles have been most celebrated for their music, and particularly their popular songs. Several collections of popular ballads have been published, all of which seem to refer to the Ruthenian peasantry in Poland, whose language differs from the Polish, and is substantially the same as the Malo-Russian. These tribes, who have been inhabitants of Poland for centuries, may with propriety be called Poles, although the name originally was exclusively applied to the Lekhian race. Their songs, after having been neglected for centuries, have been recently collected and published, as before stated. These musical and poetical effusions of nature, which have been sung in the plains of Sarmatia for fifteen centuries, so far as they relate to the people inhabiting the country adjacent to the Bug, were collected and published in 1838.

Another collection of elegies, consisting principally of Polish translations of Malo-Russian popular songs, prepared by the poets Siemienski and Bielowski, appeared at Prague in the same year. These novel productions of the lyre, which develope the popular poetry of the Cossacks, justly celebrated for their great beauty and simplicity, so surprised the literary world, that Zegota Pauli and Woicicki were the first who devoted themselves to the popular songs of the Lekhian Poles; including the songs of the peasantry in Masovia and Podlachia, the grand-duchy of Posen, the territory of Cracow, and other Lekhian settlements, whose music until then remained in obscurity, and unknown to the world beyond the domestic circles of the native inhabitants of the country.

The historical songs of Niemcewicz, published at Warsaw in 1819, and written at the solicitation of the Warsaw Society of Friends of Science, have been set to music by the most distinguished Polish musicians, some of whom are ladies. These songs, both the poetry and music, are full of patriotic feeling and martial fire, and have reached a much higher popularity than any other Polish work of the kind. The long neglect of the national ballads and music of the Polish peasantry—a nation of mere boors and serfs—is easily accounted for when we consider that these slaves, and all that appertain to them, were regarded with the utmost contempt by the nobility. Their ingenious Cracovienne, the graceful Polonaise, and the bold Masur, are among the most beautiful national dances, and known throughout the musical world. In early times their dances were always accompanied by singing, and the same practice prevails among the Slavic peasantry to the present day; and particularly among the Russian, Servian, and Polish people, who prefer to dance to the

music of the voice instead of instruments. These songs were never reduced to writing, but used extemporaneously, and handed down with the greatest care from generation to generation for centuries, composing the principal education of the Polish masses. The custom of extemporizing songs, containing national reminiscences, love scenes, and heroic exploits, reaching far back through the antiquities of tradition and mythology, continued down to the commencement of the nineteenth century, among the nobility, the country gentry, and the peasantry, at the convivial parties, holydays, military triumphs, and other festivities. These songs belonged equally to the peasantry and nobility, embracing war songs, dances, love songs, historical songs, festival songs, domestic songs, pastoral songs, and other secular music; which they used everywhere, and at all times, in the house and the field, in church and state, at markets and meetings, and elsewhere; warbling in the mouths of scores of maids, wives, and widows, while their lords and lovers joined the chorus.

The favorite scenes of the more modern Polish poets are laid principally in Lithuania and the Ukraine. Some of their ancient hymns and war-songs were sung in the churches; and among the most celebrated of this class of songs was the Boga Rodzica, or God's Mother, as it is called, composed by St. Adalbert in the tenth century. This celebrated song was chanted in the churches of Kola and Gnesen, where the venerable St. Adalbert lived and died, as late as 1812. The subject is a prayer to the Virgin, closing with a sixfold Amen, and was sung by the Polish armies when advancing in battle, as before stated. There is a great similarity between the popular ballads of the Slovakians, the Lusatian Sorabians, the Bohemians, and those published by Woicicki and Zegota Pauli. They are free from the wild, rude, and

romantic features of the songs of the Ruthenians, with whom they associated in many parts of the country. Though they are more rude and less classical in form, yet they are alternately rhymed in irregular trochaic and dactylic measure, which scarcely distinguished between poetry and prose. But they fail in comparison with the classical beauty of the Servian songs, where no privileged classes exist, and of course their popular music is free from the vulgarity which is ever the invariable product of slavery. In their social music, including wedding songs and domestic ballads, nature has maintained her dominion by preserving its primeval harmony of sentiment and feelings in the poetry of the domestic relations; and hence arises the striking similarity between the popular songs of all the Slavic nations in relation to the affairs of the heart and domestic scenes. Some of the more ancient ballads exist in different forms in the eastern and western Slavic nations; sometimes in an abridged form in the Slovakian, and again entire and much more diffuse in the Wendish language.

The Polish ballads are characterized by the history of the times when they were originally composed. Many of them had their origin in the early days of their Pagan mythology; others again mark the later periods of traditionary history; and some, still more modern, had their origin at and after the introduction of the Christian religion. Some of them mark the early period of their wars with the Turks and Tartars, who are called by these names in the Slovakian songs; but in the Wendish ballads at a later period, they are styled enemies or robbers.

In common with all other nations, the "Orphan Ballads" of the Poles rank high in their musical literature. Orphanage has ever been one of the most fruitful themes of music in all nations;

and strange as it may seem, this principle is most strikingly exemplified in the poetry of the Slavic nations, especially among the Poles. No feeling appears more prominently in the affections of humanity, than the voluntary pity which is excited at the mournful and helpless condition of motherless children, left to the scanty pittance of the world's cold and stinted charity, or perhaps to the cruelty of an unfeeling step-mother. From these deep-toned emotions of the soul have originated the best of beautiful songs, legends, and romances, which describe the moanings of the helpless babes, as reaching the ears of their departed mothers in the spirit-land, whose holy souls, pierced by the cries of their suffering orphans, rouse from the slumber of the tomb, burst asunder the bonds of death, dash in pieces the grave-stones which surround them, and in the dark and solemn stillness of midnight re-enter their once-loved, but now abused and neglected nursery, and again, by supernatural power, nurse their suffering dear ones; again comb and wash them as in days of life; and after wiping away their tears, and rocking and soothing them to sleep by their maternal lays, again retire to their deserted graves, and the land of worthy spirits. This enchanting literature nowhere appears with more beauty and native simplicity, more true to nature and nature's God, than among the Slavic nations. The Teutonic, Roman, American Indian, and the numerous Asiatic and African races, in their early history nowhere show that pure, strong maternal affection which pervaded the hearts of Polish females.

The early popular songs of the Slavic nations, and particularly the Poles, are distinguished above all other nations for their chaste sentiments and refined feelings; though it is to be regretted that the Lusatians are an exception to this rule. The early

history of this people shows them the victims of severe persecutions and oppression; while, in modern times, for several centuries, they have enjoyed the privileges of education, and German institutions, where their schools, their religion, their judiciary, and their national music, are freely secured to them. Their ballads resemble those of their German neighbors, and their melodies are decidedly Bohemian, although German songs are frequently heard among them; and they are familiar with the translations of many of the popular German ballads. It is to be regretted, however, that the music of the Lusatians, in common with most of the Teutonic and Roman nations, not unfrequently adopt for their themes, the pleasures of illicit intercourse and their consequences—a prevalent fault in French literature—which early gave an unfavorable cast to the popular poetry and music of Europe.

The liberty songs of the Poles, on the whole, excite more interest than any other subject of popular music. Many of these beautiful ballads, in connection with their affecting melodies, breathe the purest love of liberty, and betray the thrilling anguish of those who deeply feel the miseries of tyranny and slavery. These humane songs portray, in mournful measures, the poverty and sufferings of the peasantry, warmed and enlivened by hopes of better days, when the bliss of anticipated freedom will be enjoyed by every serf, and despotism banished from the land forever.

Their wedding songs are of a merry character, and are usually sung at the marriage ceremony and wedding feasts, in conformity to the old Slavic ceremonies; one of which is the bringing home of the bride in solemn procession. Much of the Polish popular music consists of old verses, principally fragments of half-forgot-

ten ballads, handed down from their ancestors by tradition. Their ancient wedding songs, which abound in Pagan allusions, are now fast giving place to the more refined bridal glees composed by the clergy.

Although the literature of Poland is rich with popular songs on various subjects, embracing love songs, war songs, poetical ballads, and almost every subject relating to the affairs of state and social life; yet they are almost entirely destitute of moral and religious subjects—a sad defect in the literature of any nation. Their most popular songs are generally of a military character; and next to these are such as relate to love and domestic life.

Russian music, and particularly those regions formerly under the dominion of Poland, is of the same general character as Poland Proper, though far inferior; and the same rule is applicable to all the Slavic nations. By the *popular* poetry and music of a people we are not to understand their classical productions, like the immortal epics of Homer and Milton, or the sublime oratorios of Handel and Haydn, which so seldom adorn the literature of this world; but those poetical and musical effusions which are the spontaneous and natural productions of the heart, and generally pervade the human family. Those literary plants have ever flourished in all climes, nations, and tribes, and seem to be as familiar to all classes as their household words. This rich mine of natural literature, until recently, has been buried in obscurity, and unknown to the world, until Germany, and more particularly Herder, discovered the quarry, and opened its rich treasures to the astonished world. The popular poetry and music of nations, particularly the Poles and other Slavic countries, have no history; and but a few faint traces of chronology,

marked by the manners, customs, traditions, mythology, and the most remote ages of antiquity. The songs and legends of the Poles, in common with their Slavic neighbors, contain many fragments of early Asiatic literature, as unerring testimonials of their Eastern origin, which the Servians and Dalmatians retain more distinctly than any other Slavic race.

Human feelings are substantially the same the world over, subject to the various grades of refinement, under the progressive influence of civilisation, literature, morals, and religion. Hence we must not expect to find in the boundless and varied treasures of Slavic love songs, war songs, national and social ballads and melodies, a single specimen of romance—the peculiar production of Christianity among the Teutonic races. The love which so beautifully blossoms in Polish and Slavic songs, is the natural, heart-felt, overpowering sensation of the human heart; flowing freely, and mingled with all the various emotions of the tender passions; sometimes perverted by sensuality and degraded human nature; though, in justice to the fair sex, their strains are more pure and elevated than the masculine, rude ballads of their lords. In their heroic songs we do not find the chivalry which inspires the martial music of the more western nations; although some vestiges, few and feeble, are met with among those Slavic nations, who, by their long and frequent intercourse with foreign races, adopted some of their feelings, manners, customs, and traditions. The noble valor of Homer's heroes differs widely from the gigantic heroism of the Slavic waiwodes and Boyars.

In the popular songs of Sarmatia, we find the musical and poetical inspiration of the east, west, north, and south, rudely and mysteriously amalgamated; which have become the common organ for expressing the revenge of the oppressed, the servile

resignation of the slave, the haughty tyranny of the despot, and the insolence of the purse-proud aristocrat; together with the activity of Asia, the energetic courage of Europe, the sensual fatalism of Turkey, and the progression of Christianity. As might be expected, the musical literature of the Poles, which pervades every bosom, frequently sings with great applause the most horrid deeds of vengeance and violence, and encores loud and long the most atrocious barbarities which ever shocked the feelings and chilled the blood of the Christian. The ancient epics of the Servians, and the more modern productions of the Poles and other Slavic nations, are less barbarous, more civilised and refined, and sometimes contain some faint traces of moral science and religion.

These popular melodies of the Polish peasantry, which are as old as the origin of their nomadic tribes, and are as familiar and as prevalent as the atmosphere they breathe, combine in their performance all the leading characteristics of dramatic song. On the occasion of their public amusements, including their night dances, their public markets, military triumphs, weddings, and other social festivities, the song is frequently opened by the voice of a beautiful peasant girl—soon another follows in duet—now some love-sick swain strikes in his tenor as a trio—another shortly after commences as a quartette—then scores of both male and female voices join in the semi-chorus—and finally, hundreds and sometimes thousands strike up the full chorus, until the welkin of surrounding miles is filled with the music of the assembled hosts, whose enchanting strains and overpowering chorus reverberate through the heavens, and echo on the distant hills, until they die away on the wings of the wind, in the dim distance of surrounding leagues.

The classical music of Poland, embracing their modern compositions, are confined principally to songs, ballads, glees, waltzes, dances, and marches, with a few specimens of church music. No oratorios, operas, or higher grades of composition, have been published, to our knowledge. Their melodies are frequently sweet and flowing; but their harmony, which consists principally of common chords, with occasionally a minor seventh, is generally tame, and indicative of a limited knowledge of harmonical progressions, and varied modulations. But Polish music never was productive of its legitimate fruits and salutary consequences, for the reason that it was confined to low subjects, and never reached that elevation of classical style, purity of morals, and religious devotion, for which the art is naturally designed.

Section XII.

GENERAL VIEWS OF POLISH LITERATURE.

In reviewing the literature of Poland, its radical imperfections and ruinous consequences strike us with surprise. Their defective literature contributed its full share in the fall of that nation. The stability of every government, and the progress of every nation, are founded on the education and literature of the people, as corner-stones, on which the state may repose with safety. No nation has ever made any considerable advances in a well-regulated government, where the people are not sufficiently educated to appreciate and sustain the fundamental principles of human freedom. In drawing a miniature of Polish literature, one of its most prominent features is its uniform connection with the political fate of the country. The literature of a people is

always an invariable index of their prosperity or adversity; and this rule holds true throughout the history of Poland. As far back as their annals can be traced, we find their progress in learning advancing or retrograding, as their civil, religious, and political institutions flourished or decayed.

If we commence the political and literary history of Poland in the twelfth century, which seems to be a fair average of the several opinions of different authors, we shall find both sympathising in each other's prosperity and adversity ever afterwards. Starting with the chronicles of the state, written in Latin by Martin Gallus, in 1109 and continuing with the annals of Nicholas Kadlubec, who died in 1223; and those of Bogufal, who died in 1255, and the Chronicle of the Popes and German Emperors, by Martin Strzembski, or Polonius, who died in 1279, the same sympathy of political and literary interests is apparent throughout. This is one of the most prominent facts in all their reliable histories. It can be distinctly traced throughout the history of the Bishop Naruszewicz, published in 1780, under the patronage of Government, running back to the introduction of Christianity in 965, from which time the history of Poland is contained in contemporary writers. Polish literature, in common with all their political institutions, began to decline in the latter part of the thirteenth century; and after a long cessation of literary progress, unitedly revived again, under Casimir the Great, who reigned from 1333 to 1370, and improved his country by building cities, by compiling a new code of laws, by the organization of Diets, by agriculture and manufactures, and by founding the university of Cracow. This institution, which was established in 1347, and revived in 1400, but never reached a flourishing condition until the sixteenth century, formed an era in Polish

literature. The fruits of Casimir's literary and political labors ripened slowly, silently, surely, and unitedly in the same garden, until Polish literature gained a permanent foothold in the soil of its native country.

In the prosperous reign of Casimir IV., in the latter part of the fifteenth century, learning began to be cultivated by the Polish nobility, and the Latin language was generally introduced both in writing and speaking. In a conference with the king of Sweden, in which Casimir was addressed in Latin, his ignorance of the language subjected him to the mortification of using a monk as his interpreter; and, after this, he enjoined the study of that language among the nobility, by a royal edict, which has continued ever since almost a living language in that country.

The press, which, according to Fletcher, was first established in Cracow in 1474, formed another important literary era. It is stated by some writers that there is a work bearing date, Cracow, 1465; but, according to Salvandy, the press in the monastery of Olivia, was the first. Immediately after the introduction of printing, the Polish language began to be cultivated and used by authors in some of the most elegant compositions of their poetry and prose. Schools were established for the accommodation of the sons of the nobility, to which a few peasants had access, under aristocratic patronage. One of the most distinguished authors of this reign was Kromer, the historian, called the Livy of Poland, and the fortunate son of a peasant, who was raised to the bishopric of Warmia and Janicki, and crowned by Pope Clement VII., with a laurel-wreath, in honor of his great literary attainments. In the same galaxy of literary stars, shines most conspicuously the name of Gregory of Sanok, the Polish Bacon, who was born about the year 1400. He held a professorship in

the university of Cracow for some time with distinction; in which he introduced a spirit of liberal and independent inquiry, worthy of a better and more advanced age. He repudiated the scholastic dialect, ridiculed astrology, and introduced a simple and logical mode of reasoning. He was a great admirer and patron of elegant learning, and was the first who introduced the works of Virgil into the literary circles of Poland.*

During the reigns of the two Sigismunds, between 1507 and 1572, the true national literature of Poland commenced; and, in a short time, made a wonderful progress in connection with the political institutions of the country. The Reformation, which was then extending its renovating, enlightening, and moral influence to every nation of Europe, directly or indirectly—although its religious principles were not adopted in Poland—met with the silent favor of the government, by extending religious toleration, by introducing greater freedom of thought, and a more refined literature. In this period, the great genius and astounding discoveries of Copernicus, shone forth through the murky clouds of the dark ages—

"velut inter ignes
Luna minores:"

and as the precursor of Newton, established a new and brighter era in the history of science, as his life, which is briefly sketched in another chapter, clearly shows. Nor can we with excusable silence omit the name of Adam Zaluzhanski, the Polish Linnæus, who, in the same age, published a work of great merit on natural history, entitled "Methodus Herbaria," in which is found his sexual arrangement of plants.†

* Fletcher, 50.

† Fletcher, 56; Encyclopædia Americana, X., 209.

At this time there were probably more printing presses in Poland than there have been at any time since, or than there were in any other European state at that time. There were eighty-three towns where they printed books; and there were fifty presses in Cracow. At this time the liberty of the press in Poland was general, and allowed the free publication of all the writings of the contending sects, which could not be printed elsewhere; and this circumstance gave rise to the great multiplicity of publishing-houses. While the light of the Reformation was dissipating the darkness of the middle ages, and rending the political elements of states, Poland received and protected the different sects of foreign nations; and all parties were allowed to repose quietly in the bosom of Sarmatia, where all were freely allowed the perfect liberty of the press. The Catholics printed their books at Cracow, Posen, Lublin, and elsewhere; while the followers of the Confession of Augsburg published theirs at Paniowica, Dombrowa, and Szamotuly; the Reformers at Pinczow, Brzesc, Knyszyn, and Nieswiez; the Arians, at Rakow and Zaslow; and the Greek Church in Lithuania, at Ostrow, and Wilna.*

As early as in the sixteenth century, a few of the Polish nobility were distinguished scholars, particularly as linguists When the ambassadors visited Paris, to announce the election of Henry to the throne of Poland, they astonished the *élite* of the French court by their long, costly robes, expensive fur caps, splendid sabres, arrows and quivers—by the sumptuousness of their equipage, the scabbards of their swords adorned with jewels, their bridles, saddles, and glittering housings, and by their dignified manners. But the surprise of all who had any

* Fletcher, 58.

literary taste was greatly increased at the beauty, ease, and elegance with which they used the Latin, French, German, and Italian languages, which were as familiar to them as their vernacular tongue. Of all the French ambassadors who had been appointed to represent the honor of the French nation in council with the Polish ambassadors, only two men of rank at court could answer them in Latin—namely, the baron of Millau, and the marquis of Castlenau-Maurissière. The reign of John Casimir was unfavorable to Polish literature. Batory had contributed largely to the spread of learning, by the introduction of the Jesuits; and the reign of Sigismund III. had furnished seven hundred Polish authors. The Polish language was more generally diffused in Lithuania, Volhynia, and other parts of Poland, where the Russian dialect had before been taught; but, during the stormy reign of Casimir, literature rapidly languished, and the incursions of the Swedes, Cossacks, and Tartars, destroyed and carried away the libraries, broke up all literary society, and checked the progress of science and education throughout the country.*

In the reign of John Sobieski, Polish literature again revived; and since his day has generally been cultivated by the nobility. The slothful and voluptuous reign of Augustus, subsequently embarrassed the progress of science for a time; but the administration of Stanislas, the philosopher, in the eighteenth century, restored the cause of science. The bishops Zaluski, and the Abbé Konarski, who followed Stanislas to France, returned to Poland, with increased enthusiasm for the pursuits of learning, and the general diffusion of literature throughout their country. Zaluski, bishop of Kiow, travelled through all the states of the

* Fletcher, 61 80.

continent in quest of books and manuscripts; devoting his time, property, and resources for this worthy purpose; and, after gathering a library of more than two hundred thousand volumes, he made a present of it to his government, as a public library. The exertions of Konarski were equally liberal and praiseworthy in the noble cause of literature. He was a member of the society of the Piarists—an order which had been established in Poland in 1642, in opposition to the principles of the Jesuits. He founded a college in Warsaw at his own expense. As a bold reformer, he wrote and published several works on learning, politics, and religion; he introduced the true spirit of the drama, and liberated education from the shackles of the Jesuits. "His exertions were at first as the small pebble that stirs the peaceful lake; but they soon spread wider and wider throughout Poland; and all the glorious attempts since made at enlightened reform in literature and policy, may be said to have owed their existence to him."*

Under the usurpations and persecutions of the Polish patriots by Catharine, the venerable Zaluski, bishop of Kiow, who had restored learning in Poland, and devoted his life and fortune to the cause of literature and the best interests of his country, was arrested and banished to Siberia, under a Russian edict, which forbade the mention of his name forever.

Alexander patronized Polish literature; and the university of Wilna flourished more under the dominion of Russia, than at any former period. He established public schools under the control of the university, and appropriated the ancient revenues of Lithuania for their support; and Wilna became the habitation of learned men, where education was freely cultivated.

From 1575 to 1586, in the active reign of Stephen Batory,

* Fletcher, 122, 141, 146, 165.

the march of literature gradually advanced with the political interests of the country; and in the subsequent reigns, John Zamoyski, the royal general, contributed liberally to the cause of science, by his own example, and by the establishment of literary institutions. Under the feeble reign of the Swedish Sigismund, and the Saxon princes, Polish literature made but little progress; but it again revived with vigor under the administration of the accomplished Stanislas Poniatowski, and retained its ground until the final conquest of the nation. The literature of Poland is not very valuable in a scientific point of view, although it has produced many excellent works in this department of learning; but its purely national character never fails to excite great interest. In Poland, as in all other states, society and learning are mutually dependent, and rise or fall together. The literature of the country was confined principally to philology, including foreign and domestic languages; Greek, Latin, German, French, Italian, and the Polish languages; also history, poetry, music, sculpture, architecture, and painting. But philosophy, mathematics, moral science, political economy, law, medicine, and the physical sciences generally, with the exception of Copernicus and a few others, met with very little success.*

The principal historians are Stryikowski, Stanislas Orzechowski, Mart. Kromer, Joh. Demetr, Sulikowski, Stanislaus Kobierzycki, Piasecki, Vespasian Kochowski, and the Jesuit Naruszewicz. The latter is distinguished for deep research, critical acuteness, and great beauty and ease of style. He commenced the general history of the Poles, which has been continued by the royal Warsaw society of sciences.

Niemcewicz, known as a statesman, a warrior, and a poet, has

* Encyl. Amer., X., 209.

published national and historical songs, with music and engravings. The works of Joh. Kochanowski, who was born in 1550, and died in 1584, are the oldest and best specimens of Polish poetry; and, for pure and noble style, beauty of versification, delicacy and feeling, were excelled but by few authors of the age. They contain a translation of the Psalms, a didactic poem on chess, songs, elegies, and epigrams. But the prince-bishop Ignatius Krasicki, who died in 1802, was probably the best of the Polish poets. The poetry of Poland excelled all other branches of literature.

Count Potocki has earned reputation by his history of the fine arts, by his rhetoric, and by his political and occasional speeches. Count Seb. Sierakowski has published a valuable work on architecture. Bratymowicz published a work on agriculture, and was distinguished for his valuable services in draining the marshes in the vicinity of Pinsk; and for his plan for the union of the navigable rivers of Poland. Important works on geology and heraldry have been contributed by Barth. Paprocki, Okolski, and Casp. Niesiecki. Stanislaus is celebrated for his useful works on politics and education. As early as 1777, Andr. Zamoyski compiled a code of Polish laws at the request of the Diet, who afterwards unwisely rejected it. Kluk. Ladowski, and Jundzill were respectable authors on natural history. The most distinguished orators of Poland were Lachowski and Wyrwicz, whose works are well known in Europe by translations.

The old Polish authors who flourished in the time of Sigismund Augustus and Stephen Batory, are generally regarded as the best classic writers; although the eighteenth century has made many valuable improvements in their language and general literature. The most distinguished writers of this old class are, Joh. Kocha-

nowski, Skarga, Wuick, Bialobrzeski, Gornicki, Stanislas Grochowski, Seb. Petryci, Joh. Januszowski, Cyprian Bazylik, Mart. Blazowski, Mart. Bielski, and others.

Among the principal modern classical prose writers of Poland may be numbered Ignatius Krasicki, Joh. Sniadecki, Naruszewicz, Skrzetuski, Jodlowski, Czacki, Louis Osinski, Stanislas Potocki, Albertrandi, Karpinski, Dmochowski, Alb. Sweykowski, and others.

The best selection from the classical authors of Poland is a work which appeared at Warsaw, in several volumes, called the *Wybor Pisar'zow Polskich.* Polish literature has received important aid from the Royal Society of the Friends of Science at Warsaw, which has published several volumes of transactions. In 1815, three literary journals in the Polish language were published at Warsaw, Wilna, and Lemberg; and in 1818 there were six.

A few of the nobility of Poland have bestowed considerable attention to learning since the twelfth century, which was gradually diffused among the aristocracy, to the almost entire exclusion of the peasantry; and, since the general peace of 1815, by means of learned societies, and periodical publications and journals, the educational interests of Poland have improved, notwithstanding the arbitrary censorship. Warsaw, Wilna, Cracow, Lemberg, Posen, and Breslau, have long been the central points of learning. Profound linguists in modern times have labored to develope the Polish language, and purify it from foreign terms, with which it has long been adulterated. A literary history of all the Slavonic nations was commenced several years since by Linde, at Warsaw, aided by several distinguished scholars. Great exertions have been made to collect the historical documents

of former times which are still in existence, and to obtain better editions of old authors. Bandtke's History of Poland, in the Polish language, appeared in a new edition, in two volumes, at Cracow and Warsaw, in 1822.

The *Monumenta Regum Poloniæ Cracoviensia* has been issued in numbers, at Warsaw, commencing in 1822, containing engravings, illustrated by a text in Polish, Latin, and French. The Polish nation have done themselves great honor by erecting to the memory of the immortal Kosciusko, at Cracow, a monument of stupendous proportions, in the old Sarmatian style, consisting of a hill one hundred and twenty feet high, and about two hundred and eighty in diameter at the base.

Nor have literary collections been entirely neglected in Poland. Many of the wealthy and learned nobles have devoted their lives and fortunes liberally to making these collections. Count Stanislas Potocki, who superintended the department of public instruction from 1803 to 1821, set the worthy example of throwing open these collections to the public use; and a library of forty thousand volumes, including many very valuable works, was collected principally by Linde, in 1819, from the suppressed monasteries.

Among the authors who are the favorites of the Poles, are Fs. Karpinski, Trembecki, Stanislaus Zachowitsch, Julius Niemcewicz, General Boguslawski, Count F. Wenzyk, and Count Alex. Fredro.

The exact and experimental sciences have also received more attention of later years. Macieiowski, Budny, and Sanwicki, have written on jurisprudence; and the present university of Warsaw arose from the law schools founded by Count Lubienski.

The university of Warsaw, and the most distinguished in Poland, was founded in 1776, by Stanislas Augustus, in which is taught a variety of languages—embracing the Polish, the French, the German and Latin languages; also mathematics, in all its branches, fortification, military tactics, history, etc. It was originally designed for the education of the sons of the nobility, and has ever been confined almost exclusively to that object, except a few foreigners. This institution was abolished and re-modelled by Alexander in 1816. There are but few universities in Europe more liberally endowed than that of Warsaw. It has forty-two professors, who are divided into five faculties, divinity, law, medicine, mathematics, and physical science, the fine arts and literature. Many of the professors are distinguished authors and gentlemen of great literary distinction. The number of students has always been respectable; though not equal to the means and facilities of the institution.*

The university of Cracow, once the great school of the north, founded by Casimir the Great, which has long been frequented by crowds of students, was broken up during the wars and civil commotions, and all attempts to restore it to its former splendor have failed. It has, however, at present thirty professors, and about two hundred and seventy-six students.

Formerly the schools and educational interests of Poland were restricted to the nobility only, under the instructions of the religious orders—the Lazarists, Piarists, and Jesuits. Previous to the partition, they founded a few gymnasia towards the end of the eighteenth century, and some common and country schools; but never had any well organized school system. During the existence of the grand-duchy of Poland, worthy intentions were

* Edinburgh Encyclopædia, Art. Poland.

avowed to provide for the general education of the children of both sexes; but they all failed in preliminary discussions, and never were executed; and the final subjection of Poland to the Russian power, has forever blighted all hopes of any general, well-organized system of education in that country, under the present government.*

A few of the libraries in Poland, both public and private, were extensive and highly valuable. The library of one of the kings contained forty-five thousand volumes, and the library of the bishops embraced two hundred thousand volumes; which, together with the pictures, were removed to St. Petersburg, in Russia, after the final conquest. The care of packing the famous library of the Zaluski, which belonged to the republic, and contained, exclusive of duplicates, two hundred thousand volumes, was committed to the Cossacks. Their love of literature was so indifferent, that they threw many of the works into the street, burned others, and packed the remainder in confused heaps in old chests and insecure boxes. This valuable, but mutilated cargo, during its conveyance to St. Petersburg, in sledges, frequently received additional injuries from the bursting of the boxes in which the books were inclosed; while the barbarous soldiers picked up the precious and abused volumes, and pressed them down with the points of their sabres, ignorant of any better method of discharging the duties of librarian.†

The great misfortune of Poland in their literary matters has ever been a want of the general education of the masses, and particularly the peasantry. Previous to Stanislas Poniatowski, no efforts were made for educating the lower classes, who are

* American Encyclopædia, XI., 255.

† Malte Brun, IV., 358.

almost destitute of learning; and very little progress has been made in the education of the common people even to the present day. Poland has produced many distinguished scholars and writers in various departments of learning. Copernicus was the first sound astronomer. Vitello, of the thirteenth century, was the first in Europe who investigated the theory of light, and demonstrated its fundamendal principles. The Polish language, which is derived from the Russian, the Bohemian, the Wend and Slavonian dialects of Illyria, has been greatly improved, and reduced to a written language; all of which are distinguished by numerous harsh consonants, and therefore, difficult for the pronunciation of strangers.

The most effective means for the cultivation and general diffusion of knowledge are schools; comprehending universities, colleges, academies, common schools, and other similar institutions. These literary institutions form the most powerful element of modern society. This mighty engine of modern improvement is comparatively of recent date, and has been slow and sure in its progress. The great benefits of schools are mostly confined to a very small portion of our globe; and principally within the limits of Germany, England, Scotland, France, and the United States of America. The absence of common school education in Poland, has produced the same effects in that country as in all others, where the general education of the masses has been neglected. In looking through the history of schools, their origin, progress, and effects, it is a matter of great interest to note how slowly, laboriously, and usefully they have exerted their influence, by diffusing knowledge in a thousand channels, until civil society has reached its present state of improvement. In early antiquity, education and instruction were entirely confined

to the domestic circle. Afterwards, where priestly or royal despotism prevailed, schools were first established for the sons of the great, the nobility, and for the priests. Moses received his education in a school of priests in Egypt; Cyrus the Great was educated in a Persian court; the Indian Brahmins taught in secret schools; the schools of Palestine were taught by the prophets and those learned in the Scriptures; and, at later periods, instructions were given in the synagogues and the schools of the rabbies. These schools were accessible to few; and conversation, reading, committing to memory, and hearing the explanation of sacred books, constituted the usual course of study and means of education in these schools. The Greeks advanced a step farther; and, as early as 500 B. C., boys and girls, in the Greek cities, were taught reading, writing, and arithmetic, under the care of the parents—except in Sparta; while the country people remained in great ignorance. A similar state of education prevailed in Rome, which had schools for boys in the cities 300 B. C.; and, from the age of Cæsar, who conferred the rights of citizenship on teachers, the higher institutions of the grammarians prevailed in a limited extent. But we look in vain for any regular school system among the ancient nations. The emperor Vespasian was the first who established public professorships of grammar and rhetoric, with salaries attached to them, for the education of young men for the public service; and Antoninus Pius, in 150 A. D., founded imperial schools in the larger cities of the Roman empire, which resembled the German gymnasia. Public schools, under sectarian and political control for the exclusive benefit of the nobility, the wealthy, and the great, of limited numbers and means, constituted the state of education during the dark ages. This was the character of the

Polish schools; and they never emerged from the paralyzing influence of the schools and literature of the middle ages, which prevailed in Europe from the fifth to the fifteenth centuries.

The degraded literature of the dark ages is a sombrous and chilling theme of meditation. No one can sit down midway between the commencement and close of the nineteenth century, and compare the present state of learning, civilization, and society, with the ignorance and barbarism of the tenth century, and the five centuries next previous and following, without mingled feelings of joy for the present and deep regret for the past. In the melancholy retrospect, we see the noble powers of man, which the race has possessed ever since their first bestowment in Eden, alternately growing and decaying, like the flowers of the American prairie in the fertile soil of the far west; without culture, without utility, and finally producing a most poisonous miasma, which spreads death over the country, and renders it unfit and dangerous for the abode of man. The ignorance of the dark ages was not confined, in its blighting consequences, to any age or country, as Poland has learned to her sorrow. Its baneful influence has been insidiously diffused throughout the habitable globe, and has contaminated the literature, society, government, laws, civilization, and morals of every nation to a greater or less extent. The history of ignorance is a history of darkness, vice, malevolence, war, rapine, destruction, misery, and death. The moral darkness of antiquity, which for more than fifty centuries shrouded human society, was occasionally penetrated with a few rays of intellectual light, which shone in Palestine, Egypt, Greece, and Rome; yet, their influence was so feeble, that like the faint glimmer of a taper in a dark night, it served only to render the surrounding darkness visible; until even this small light was

extinguished by the more dense darkness which filled the world from the fifth to the fifteenth century. In the fifth century of the Christian era, the numerous barbarous hordes of the north and eastern parts of Europe, and the north-western parts of Asia, overran and subdued the western part of the Roman empire—at that time the citadel of literature for the world; and in their ruthless march overturned and almost annihilated every monument of science and art, which then adorned the world. Their progress was marked by blood and devastation, equally regardless of all things sacred or profane, barbarous or refined. "Amidst the din of war, the burning of cities, the devastation of provinces, the convulsions of nations, the ruin of empires, and the slaughter of millions, the voice of reason and religion was scarcely heard; science was abandoned; useful knowledge was set at naught; every benevolent feeling and every moral principle was trampled under foot. The earth seemed little else than one great field of battle; and its inhabitants, instead of cultivating the peaceful arts and sciences, and walking hand in hand to a blessed immortality, assumed the character of demons, and gave vent to the most fiend-like and ferocious passions, till they appeared almost on the brink of total extermination."*

After this general work of death—the death of literature and the almost total destruction of everything dear to humanity—the moral world closed its eyes in despair, and lay down to the slumbers of a thousand years; until the voice of Luther, at the dawn of the Reformation, roused the dormant energies of man to the light of the fifteenth century. The voice of the great moral reformer was soon heard by Copernicus, Bacon, Newton, and other literary reformers; and learning assumed its proper

* Dick on the General Diffusion of Knowledge, XI.

rank, and wielded its legitimate power in civil society. But unfortunate Poland never awoke from the long slumbers of the dark ages! All her institutions, her government, laws, literature, commerce, religion, manners and customs, ever retained the fatal stamp of the age of darkness and ignorance; and this made the difference between Poland and the other European states, which now rank so high in learning and national glory.

There is an indispensable connection between the nature of man, and the nature and design of learning and wisdom. The former is a being to be nourished, improved, developed, and perfected; the latter is the aliment of his progressive existence. Man is a physical, intellectual, moral, mortal, and immortal being; and all his powers and faculties are dependent on knowledge of some kind, for their due improvement and enjoyment. His physical and mortal nature is directly dependent on the laws of health or medical science; and all the animal propensities may be greatly improved, and rendered more subservient to human happiness by education. The intellectual, moral, and immortal constitution of human beings, during an endless existence, derives its principal enjoyment from the knowledge and wisdom of the Creator and his works; which may be acquired in this life and the life to come. Human happiness is so inseparably connected with the acquisition of knowledge in all its branches, that we look in vain for any true bliss derived from ignorance. Human and divine authority harmonize in the conclusion, that one of the principal ingredients of future happiness will be the continued acquisition of that wisdom, which will reveal more extensively and more perfectly the character of God and His works.

The arts, sciences, and general literature, are so harmoniously combined as to form one connected whole; and must be so learned

and practised. The elementary principles of natural, moral, and judicial law must form the basis of even a common school education; at least, so far as ordinary practical utility is concerned. The first principles of natural science—including language, both spoken and written, arithmetic, agriculture, mechanical arts and commerce; the moral sciences, embracing mental and moral philosophy and theology; judicial learning—comprehending political economy, government, national law, municipal law, human rights, the law of freedom, the rights of property, and the fundamental principles of jurisprudence, are contained in the text-books of the common school system of Germany, England, Scotland, and America. But this state of literature never prevailed in Poland. They cultivated their own national literature—the history of their country, their language, their poetry and fiction; but the physical sciences, the moral sciences, government and law, received little or no attention, saving a few individual exceptions; and in this consisted the serious defects of Polish literature. They were ignorant of the moral sciences, of government, law, and order; and this ignorance was one of the principal causes of all their misfortunes, and of their final conquest and ruin.

The Poles, in common with all the other early nations of Europe, were a remarkably superstitious people; and, while the elevating and improving influence of modern science redeemed and relieved the other nations of Europe from their superstitious degradation, the law and defective literature of Poland left them a prey to their visionary notions and vain fears.

The Poles., for a long time in many sections of the country, refused to use iron or any metallic substance on their ploughs and instruments of husbandry, fearing it might injure the tender

bosom of their mother earth. Under the same ignorant and imaginary influence, all the phenomena of nature, in heaven and earth, have been arrayed in the same superstitious terrors. An eclipse of the moon or sun filled them with the greatest consternation, and the worst fears of some awful catastrophe about to befall them. Sympathizing with the body eclipsed, which they believed to be sickening or dying, by the influence of evil incantations, the ignorant and horror-struck spectators sought to relieve the suffering sun or moon by loud cries and horrid exclamations, the sounding of trumpets, the ringing of bells, and the beating of brazen vessels, in order to break the enchantment and prevent the eclipsed body from hearing the noise and cries of the witches. The blaze of comets, the aurora borealis or northern lights, the flight of birds, and the untimely fall of snow, were gazed upon by the trembling inhabitants with great astonishment; whose perverted imagination pictured to their false vision armies mingling in fierce combat, fields streaming with blood, fallen states, earthquakes, inundations, pestilences, and other dreadful calamities. The *judicial astrology* of the Poles and other nations, is the offspring of the same ignorance. The trial by battle, the crime of witchcraft, and the decision of judicial rights by games of hazard, by dreams, prejudice and bribery, have a similar origin. These silly superstitions, and hundreds of others equally disgraceful, were ever prevalent in Sarmatia and modern Poland, and have cost them thousands of lives and millions of wealth.*

The pernicious effects of Polish literature are seen in their medical science, and the peculiar and unnecessary diseases of the country. The Poles have ever been exposed to a greater number of diseases than their neighbors; although their natural strength

* Stephens, II., 185.

and physical constitution generally received increased vigor from the hardy way in which they were brought up. The peculiar maladies of the country are properly attributed to the want of agriculture, the quality of the air, which is poisoned and rendered unwholesome by large, stagnant, and numerous marshes, to the absence of good water, and the uncleanly and vicious habits of the great majority of the people. Some of the malignant diseases in Poland are unknown in Russia; and the maladies, common to both nations, are both contagious and dangerous in Poland, although the Russian parallel is the highest.*

With the exception of small-pox, endemic diseases seldom prevail. This complaint has been more fatal in Poland than any other country known in the history of the malady. The cause is owing principally to improper medical treatment, bad diet, and their manners and habits of living. Both the healthy and diseased are crowded together in large numbers, in small, filthy hovels used as dwellings, where the fetid vapors which are exhaled, and the excessive heat of the apartment, all conspire in increasing the malignity of the disease, until the mortality reached the proportion of six or seven to ten. The miserable survivors of this pestilence are frequently frightfully disfigured and blinded; and this explains why there are more blind people in Poland than in any other state of Europe.

The prevalence of syphilis in the large towns frequently numbered as six to ten; and, according to Dr. Lafontaine, eighty were attacked with it, out of a hundred recruits which he examined. The effects of this most horrid of all diseases may be seen in every Polish village, where the most loathsome of all human beings have been deprived of the nose and regular features, by

* Malte Brun IV 356

the ravages of a malady created by the ignorance and vice of man, and unknown in the beautiful works of God.*

The *Plica*, or Polish plague, which has long been one of the most fatal diseases known in that or any other country, and generally confined to the peasantry of Poland, is principally attributed to the wretched condition of society, their food, drink, clothing, habits of life, and the general want of knowledge of the laws of health, and the absence of medical skill.†

Modern science has proved very conclusively, that a state of learning, which gives the masses a knowledge of the general laws of health, greatly tends to prevent many of those diseases and fatal accidents which arise from ignorance of the laws that govern the operations of nature; guards against those casualties which frequently happen from ignorance of the nature and property of the several gases—shields the dependent operatives from the disasters which have frequently happened in coal mines—protects both man and beast from the forked lightnings—and relieves the weary traveller from all anxiety in relation to the dangers which frequently happen from the mismanagement and bursting of the steam engines which may propel his boat or car.

But the disastrous effects of ignorance, and the want of a general diffusion of a sound, symmetrical, and healthy literature, among the people of Poland, are not confined to their revolting superstitions, their loathsome and mortal diseases; but they may be clearly traced in all their institutions, and all their individual and national affairs. Every page of their history, from its earliest day, shows a people involved in the meshes of vice, superstition, and ignorance; ever learning but never wise—ever hoping for

* Malte Brun, IV., 356; Connor, II., 90.

† Encyclopædia Americana, X., 186; Connor, II., 91.

better days, but never enjoying them—ever battling and bleeding for liberty, but never free.

Improvement or progression, one of the fundamental laws of all creation, both natural and moral, was not found in their vocabulary—had no place in their encyclopædia of literature, and was never understood by Polish intellect. The golden age of Odin, the god of their ancestors, was the most perfect state of individual, social, and national existence, within the range of their knowledge, or the grasp of their imagination; and hence, they most strenuously resisted all efforts of modern reform, as so many departures from the halcyon days of their fabulous divinity.

Had the light of science shed its refulgent, genial, and benign rays through the forests and lawns of Sarmatia; had the schoolmaster of the nineteenth century lectured in the palaces of royalty, the castles of the nobility, and the log cabins of the peasantry, Polish literature would have sparkled with the beauties of the fine arts, the utilities of the useful arts, the riches of physics, and the sublimities of government, jurisprudence, and moral science. They would have learned before it was too late, the true antidote for their idle superstitions, and fatal diseases of their own ignorant and vicious manufacture—their intellectual standard would have been elevated above a few chapters of national history, poetry, and fiction, to the more sober, practical, and useful learning of mental and moral culture. The common school literature of Germany, Scotland, and America, would have taught them the difference between progression and stubborn egotism. Their crude notions of sovereignty, which surrendered everything to the one-man-power, would have given place to the more rational philosophy, that the people are the only legitimate sovereigns.

Had they heeded the admonitions of Luther and Calvin, they would have learned a higher, purer, and better divinity than Odin—a religion in its precepts and examples, in its benevolence and virtue, far superior to the ignorance, superstition, and licentiousness of their paganism; and a single sermon from Robert Hall on the ravages of war, might have revealed to them its ultimate consequences in their own sad history. In every aspect of Polish literature, we see the direful consequences of ignorance, as delineated in their national and individual character; in their dark history, their retrograde progression, their powerless sovereignty, their inconsistent, antagonistic aristocracy, and their destructive slavery. Had they consulted the philosophy of Bacon, or the moral science of Johnson, or the polity of Hooker, they would have foreseen the catastrophe of their national drama, as acted in the various characters of their history, progression, sovereignty, aristocracy, slavery, representation, assemblies, army, wars, society, feudalism, literature, government, laws, democracy, wealth, religion, politics, civilization, and final conquest.

In all our investigations, the history of Polish literature, in connection with the political history of the country, has been found to wax or wane invariably with the civil and religious institutions of the nation; and the same is true of all nations in all ages of the world.

One of the most prominent defects in the literature of Poland, and which has led to the most serious consequences, was the absence of mental philosophy. This most important branch of education, which should be taught in all schools, high and low, was, with a very few exceptions, entirely neglected in their schools, their text-books, their libraries, and general literature.

It has always been a standing charge against the Poles, that they were radically defective in reasoning, in judgment, and common sense. It was their great misfortune ever to be wrong; and the cause of their fatal errors may safely be ascribed, in a great measure, to their ignorance of mental philosophy. It is the peculiar province of this science to produce a well-regulated sound mind, by educating and improving all the intellectual moral, and physical powers, and qualifying them to fill the particular sphere in which they are designed to move. A mind well regulated, next to eternal salvation, is the best gift of Heaven, and the greatest acquisition of man. But like all other precious jewels of great price, it costs much hard labor to find it. The qualities and acquirements necessary to a sound and well-balanced mind, the means of securing it, and the numerous and superior advantages which flow from it, are the elements of that most important science.

The cultivation of a habit of steady and continuous attention; or of properly directing the mind to any subject which is before it, so as fully to contemplate it in all its elements and relations—the careful regulation and control of the succession of our thoughts—the cultivation of an active, inquiring state of mind, which seeks for truth and information from every source and means that come within its reach, in reading, conversation, personal observation, or otherwise—the habit of correct association, by connecting facts in the mind according to their true relations and the manner in which they best illustrate each other—a careful selection of worthy and useful subjects for the occupation of the mind—a due regulation and proper control of the imagination—clear, profound, and accurate reasoning—the acquisition of a calm and correct judgment, applicable equally to the forma-

tion of opinions and the regulation of conduct—an enlightened and active conscience, regulated by the will of God, the principles of benevolence and sound moral feelings—pure affections placed upon objects according to their excellence and utility—with a will under the control of reason, judgment, and conscience—are the fruits of mental science when duly cultivated, and in which the Poles were sadly deficient.

Another lamentable defect in Polish literature was the neglect of natural philosophy, which investigates the physical laws of the universe. One of the most prominent facts in the history of literature, is the neglect of philosophy in all its departments, by tyrannical governments; and no government was more tyrannical than Poland. Despots always shun and detest philosophical investigation and reflection, for the well-known reason, that in all ages and nations sound reasoning and truthful investigation concerning the laws of the natural world, invariably lead to analogous reflections on human laws, which ultimately give rise to free principles, republican governments, and the overthrow of tyrants.

Moral philosophy, another indispensable branch of education to all classes of citizens, was scarcely known to Polish literature. Moral science is a most dangerous foe to despotism and tyrannical aristocracy. Oppression in all its forms ever betrays its guilt, by shunning all investigation of truth and justice—the invariable standard of right and wrong in relation to human actions. It is the province of moral science to inculcate justice, equity, liberty, and equality among men; to teach superiors condescension, courtesy to equals, respect to inferiors, and equal rights to all. Such lessons of course could not be tolerated in a government where half a million of aristocrats ruled over fourteen millions of

slaves, with the power of life and death; and was therefore continuously excluded from Polish literature, and formed no part of their educational system. Nor was it among the least of the defects in Polish literature, that the substantial learning of civilised Europe was both neglected and contemned.

But the most melancholy commentary on the literature of Poland is the almost entire absence of sound religious learning. This important branch of science teaches man his duties and relations to his Maker, to mankind, his duties to himself, and the rewards and punishments of his obedience or disobedience to the Divine will. The great poet of England is mistaken in his proverb, that "The great study of mankind is man." The truth is, the great study of man is God; and it is the peculiar province of a pure religious literature to teach this important lesson, which man, in his deranged, perverted state, is so slow to learn. With a few exceptions, the cold dogmas of the Greek and Roman Church, the stationary, skeptical, superannuated religion of the Jews, and the superstitions of Paganism, constituted the entire religious education and worship of Poland. All these systems of religion in Poland, and throughout the world, generally oppose the education and elevation of the masses; fearing that their priestcraft, which delights in ignorance, and the monopoly of literature, to the entire neglect of the common people, will be exposed.

Poland was a nation of warriors, and the arts of war formed the principal part of their education. Military tactics was the great object of life, and the leading topics of thought from the cradle to the grave. All their literature was filled with the one controlling idea of human butchery and bloodshed. War was the grand theme of their history, their poetry, their music, their religion,

and every branch of their literature and education. It diffused itself through all their amusements, mingled in all their domestic scenes, inspired their imperfect devotions, and exercised a controlling influence over everything that belongs to Polish life. This strange military inspiration seems to be inheritable from parent to child, from generation to generation for centuries. Commencing in embryo existence, it was the toy of infancy, the sports of childhood, the pride of youth, the business of manhood, the ornament of gray hairs, the consolation of death, and the epitaph of the grave. Military science held such a decided preponderance in all their education and literature, that all other branches of learning were held in subservience to this all controlling principle, and its blighting, ruinous consequences, mark the whole history of Polish literature. The study of languages, the arts of war, dancing, and gambling, constituted the main branches of a Polish education among the great majority of the nobility. They were generally brave warriors, good linguists, graceful dancers, and shrewd gamesters; but bad philosophers, insane logicians, corrupt moralists, and pagan Christians.

Among the hundreds and almost thousands of histories found in Polish literature, we look in vain for a single volume, a single chapter, or a solitary principle of philosophical history, except a few limited chapters from the pens of Polish exiles since the conquest, written and published in foreign lands. Their numerous histories are all filled with a simple narrative of facts; composed principally of battles and the eulogies of princes, without a single principle or inference drawn from them, showing the disastrous policy of the government. A more serious defect in the literature of a country could hardly be named.

Although education was generally diffused among the nobility,

so far as was deemed necessary for the profession of arms, yet female education was generally very limited, except among a few of the noble families, who devoted themselves to literary pursuits. Flippant and graceful conversation, polite dancing, a limited knowledge of music, and external appearance, constituted the whole of a finished female education among the generality of Polish ladies.

The political, medical, and forensic sciences were not only entirely neglected, but they were held in contempt; and hence we find the country without law, without government, and infested with the most loathsome and fatal diseases. But the worst of all defects in Polish literature, was the entire neglect of education among the masses. A state of society where literature is entirely confined to five hundred thousand, to the total neglect of fourteen millions, needs no prophet to foretell, no commentary to explain the ruinous consequences that must inevitably follow such fatal causes.

In every country where literature was thus defective, robbed of all its charms and deprived of all moral vitality, continued through more than fifteen centuries, the same ruinous consequences have invariably followed as in Poland; a sad memento of all fallen nations, and an admonishing beacon to all surrounding kingdoms and republics, to shun similar consequences by avoiding similar causes.

Thus far in our researches we have found several adequate causes for the fall of this unhappy people, all of which, when considered separately, or in connection, cannot fail to predict the similar fate of every nation which pursues the same course, and adopts the same erroneous principles; and, it would be no difficult task to show from the data already before us, that the same

erroneous policy and similar causes, have led to the ultimate ruin of all the fallen nations of antiquity.*

* Schaffarik's Geschichte der Slav. Sprache; Bowring's Polish Anthology, London, edit. 1827; Ljach Szyrma's Letters on Poland, London, edit.; An Article on Polish Literature in the Foreign Quarterly Review, vol. xxv., No. 49; Wiszniewski's History of Polish Literature, published at Warsaw, in 1840; Dr. Connor's History of Poland; Bentkowski's History of Polish Literature, published at Warsaw in 1814; Bowring's Specimens of the Polish poets; An Article on Lettish Popular Poetry, in the Foreign Quarterly Review, vol. viii., p. 61; Schaffarik's Slavic Antiquities; History of Russian Literature, with a Lexicon of Russian Authors, Translated from the German by G. Cox, Oxford edit., 1839; Encyclopædia Americana, vol. x., pp. 201, 212; Burney's History of Music; Literature of the Slavic Nations, by Talvi, 1850, p. 222.

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